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THE TOWER GARDENS.

BY L. ALLDRIDGE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT THE THEATRE.

"IF Mac could only see me!" said Jessie, as she stood before the glass, giving a few last touches to her toilette.

Jessie was quite astonished at herself; never before had she seen her image looking so beautiful. She hardly recognised herself, and yet she was certain that what she looked at was the reflection of Jessie; but it was Jessie idealized, etherealized, the Jessie of a poem or of a picture, not the work-a-day Jessie, who had made scones in Birrendale, nor the merely festive Jessie, who had danced the Highland Schottische with Mac at the ball where they had first met.

This was a Jessie seen under the exquisite light and shade of emotions too absorbing to be concealed, as different from any other Jessie as the Tower, seen under a summer moonlight, or twilight, or on a spring morning, half-veiled in wreaths of mists, is from the same Tower on a grey prosaic day at noon.

Jessie was vain, her vanity was pleased, but to-night she rather stood in awe of herself, of her position, of everything. For the time even her merry tongue wagged not.

At the appointed hour her father arrived. Jessie gave one look at Alison, whose appearance more than compensated her for the care she had bestowed upon her—and another at herself, and went downstairs in her only long skirt, a pale grey silk, John Harbuckle's gift.

She came into the drawing-room in her floating silk and her soft laces and faint blush roses with a strange mingling of self-consciousness and dreamy unreality in her expression, her bright eyes more dewy than usual, her lips curving with a trembling smile.

"Am I—can I be the owner of so much beauty?" asked her father, stepping towards her.

But the words failed to flatter her. Her heart, her face chilled with anxiety—the curve of her lips straightened.

"Father, how ill you look! What has happened?"

"Yesterday tried me very much, my darling," he said, kissing her.

"And me too," she said, with a sigh, and for an instant her head sank upon his shoulder. Then Mrs. Bayliss came in. Her brother-in-law's appearance struck her. He was looking wretchedly ill, his eyes were dim, his face a faded yellow, but his beard and moustache curled as crisply as ever; and she thought that since her husband's death she had not seen a man with so fine a figure as his looked in his evening clothes.

And here I may say that her affection for her husband made her unjust to his brother. James Bayliss had lacked both the finish and one of the inches of Arthur, Jessie's father.

It was not often that Mrs. Bayliss looked at her daughter with approval, but she nodded and smiled this evening when Alison appeared in almost the same dress as Jessie's, only her roses were darker.

"Where's Uncle John?" asked Alison, looking round the room.

"Oh, he's writing to Mr. Woolcomb, or to some other of his old fossils," said Mrs. Bayliss. "He wouldn't care to be disturbed."

"It's getting late; we had better start at once," said Arthur Bayliss uneasily. "Come, Jessie," and he laid her hand on his arm, as if to walk away with her.

"Wait one minute," cried Alison, and ran up to John Harbuckle's den.

"Uncle John! Uncle John! We're going!" she called at the door.

"Come in, my dear," said he, and Alison went in.

John Harbuckle was not writing, he was reading the Gospel according to St. Luke; that third Gospel, the symbol of which devout minds have seen in the third living creature of Revelation, that had a face as of a man; the Gospel of the Son of Man.

He looked grave, sad, old. Alison was for a moment sorry she had disturbed him.

"You look very nice, my dear, very nice," he said, turning round and surveying his niece. Alison thought he seemed so sad and lonely that her heart smote her that she was going to leave him alone, for she knew he would not go downstairs to his sister; she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"They are waiting. I must go. I wish I might stay at home with you," she said hurriedly.

"Don't detain them, Alison. Good-bye, my dear," he said. "You look very nice. I shall think of you."

He spoke so seriously Alison felt quite touched.

"What has happened to Uncle John?" she asked herself, as she ran downstairs.

Now Jessie and, in a lesser degree, Alison, appreciated the way in which Arthur Bayliss took them out.

It was a great satisfaction to Jessie to find that her father approved of evening dress for evenings. It had been so long since she had worn it that it was quite an event. Uncle John had taken them to concerts now and then; but he never made a change in his own dress, and expected them to go in their walking jackets.

Jessie could not but feel that her father in this respect showed himself a very superior person. Also, he did not propose they should go by train, neither did he merely send for a cab, but drove round for them in a brougham. Evidently Jessie's father knew the ways of the world, and the proper methods of taking girls about. What a delightful thing to find oneself suddenly the owner of such a father!

"And, indeed," she said in her heart, as they drove down Tower Hill, "I can't wonder that my poor little mother preferred him to Uncle John. Really, I don't see how she could help it! I think Mac will like him! I feel sure Mac will like him! I hope they will get on together! Why shouldn't they? Of course they will. Dear Mac, it was too bad of me not to have written to him to-day! To-morrow he shall have a long, long letter."

"Imagine my really going to the theatre again with you!" she said aloud. "It doesn't seem real, does it? I can't believe it!"

And Jessie, when they were fairly *en route*, began to talk a great deal of nonsense, and again feel herself a very important person, and behave as one. Her father laughed at her rubbish, listened to it as if half fascinated; and indeed the finest wit had never seemed so charming to him.

So they went to the theatre and had a box, and saw—for Arthur Bayliss would not risk having his feelings more harrowed than they were already—an opera bouffe.

This was Arthur Bayliss's first appearance in any place of amusement since his return.

His ideals of right and wrong were the ideals of his boyhood, so he was not long in regretting he had brought the girls to that theatre.

They laughed, innocently enough; when they laughed he scowled.

He had had abundant opportunity of studying the morals of actual life, both on the West Coast of Africa and elsewhere; but his ideal of what morals ought to be was based upon the teaching of his mother and the examples of his late sisters and wife.

Consequently, he was extremely shocked at everything. The poor dear girls, however, who had had but few opportunities of studying human nature, saw no harm in anything, and enjoyed the novelty of the whole scene very much.

Of course Jessie sat next to her father. Sometimes she turned round suddenly to him, and gave him the full benefit of her eyes and smiles; sometimes he bent towards her and whispered a remark, generally about the abominable dress or coiffure of the period, of

which there were only too many examples present; when he did so his action and attitude, seen from a distance, might have been easily mistaken for a lover's; there was about it as little as possible of the paternal. This, perhaps, was, under the circumstances, not only excusable, but natural. Arthur Bayliss, in his memory, cherished a fond paternal affection for "his little girl," which he could not immediately transfer—at any rate as to outward form—to the beautiful young woman sitting by his side.

There was a man in the stalls who found the ladies on the stage hardly as interesting as those who were off it. He was rather—indeed very much—struck with Jessie. He began to speculate as to the relationship between her and the man who was with her, and who paid so little attention to the other girl in the box.

"Should you say they were engaged or just married?" he asked himself; and then he pointed out the couple to his companion, whose eyes had been hitherto mostly on the stage, and who was laughing heartily, and as if he had not a care in the world, as, indeed, at that moment he had not; for all day long he had been telling himself he was the happiest man in the world. It was his last laugh, poor fellow, for many and many a day to come!

With his face still beaming, the young fellow raised his merry eyes to the box. At that moment Arthur Bayliss leaned towards Jessie, Jessie turned with unusual vivacity and looked up into his face with a radiant smile—she was enjoying herself so very much.

"Ah! if Mac could only see me now," Jessie had said, as she looked at herself in the glass just before starting.

Her wish had come true: the young man over whose honest face rushed a burning flush as he saw those two together was Mac Carruthers.

And she was thinking of him at that very moment; and all the evening long she had been planning that letter she meant to write to him to-morrow; and in spite of all other emotions and pleasure, and the more so the more her feelings were moved, ran through her heart:

"Together, for ever; for ever, together—with Mac—with Mac—with Mac, for ever."

And Mac was there; and Mac's face burned and paled, and his heart turned faint and then fierce; and Jessie sat there smiling by her father's side, and never knew that one roof covered her and Mac Carruthers.

"If Mac could only see me!"

Ah! if Jessie could but have known what was to come of his seeing her, how earnestly would she have besought Heaven that Mac might not see her then!

But Mac had seen her; he had come in with his companion very late, he had seen her and the man with the too lover-like ways, and all his future, and her future with his, was to feel that he had seen her. Poor Mac, how his face burned with fury! How suddenly his last laugh was stopped!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JESSIE ON TIP-TOES.

"COME, Jessie," said Arthur Bayliss, with more authority than he had assumed before towards his newly-found daughter.

Jessie was unused to any authority except her own, for even with her aunt she generally had her own way; that imperious inflection of the voice made her feel that she must obey.

She was just then too happy for resentment, but she did not quite like obedience.

"It's nearly over," she said, as if reluctant to leave before the very end.

"We've had more than enough of it. Come!"

And he rose. There was nothing but for Alison and Jessie to rise too.

They had both been absorbed in the grotesque fun of the final scene which was then in progress. They looked at the stage and listened to the sparkling music to the very last moment they were allowed to remain. It was the first time they had been in a theatre since the pantomime days before Captain Bayliss had taken Cauldknowe—it was all very fresh and delightful to them. The stage, I repeat, held them to the last, so that they never saw the young man in the stalls who was frantically trying to make for them. Their box was empty before he reached it.

He was too late. Mac and Jessie were destined not to meet that night.

"I'm infinitely disgusted!" exclaimed Arthur Bayliss, with virtuous indignation, as soon as they were safely in the brougham again.

"'Twas infinitely amusing," retorted Jessie, laughing.

"I'm shocked to hear you say so," said her father sternly. "One excuses that sort of thing in savages, but to come back to one's own country—that one has fondly believed to be a civilised, Christian country—and find it publicly encouraged, is more disgusting than anything I can imagine."

"I'm sure, father, I didn't see anything shocking or wrong; I shouldn't have laughed at it if I had. It was only very funny," said Jessie.

"I don't know what you've all been doing while I've been away," said Bayliss. "But it now appears to be proper to flaunt in the faces of decent people whatever used to be considered most improper. Well, I know for the future I shall take very good care not to come with you to any play I haven't first seen myself."

"I'm sure I shouldn't have thought it was wicked if you hadn't told me, father," said Jessie. "I don't think it's done me much harm; even now, I don't know what was so shocking in it."

"Bad tone, bad tone, very bad tone! You, Alison, must feel so, I'm sure."

"Now I come to think of it—yes," said Alison. "But it was very amusing."

Then Arthur Bayliss, who was exceedingly wretched about other matters, attacked the manners and dress of the period with very bitter sarcasm:

"In fact," he said in conclusion, "you were about the only two girls in the whole place I should care to have been seen with, and I'm not sure that Jessie does not frizzle her hair a great deal too much over her eyes. I remember sitting behind my sister once at a concert and noticing the exquisite neatness of her head. There wasn't a hair awry, it was as smooth as satin; but gentlewomen were in those days unmistakable gentlewomen; they might be taken for actresses or milliners, or in fact anything now."

So he growled the whole way down by Tower Hill; Mrs. Bayliss came to the door to let them in; but the girls at that time were feeling so suppressed that they hardly dared to tell her how much they had enjoyed themselves.

"You'll come upstairs?" said Mary Bayliss to her brother-in-law.

"Where is Harbuckle?" asked Arthur Bayliss.

"I suppose he's up in his den," Mary returned. "I've seen nothing of him all the evening."

"Never turn antiquary, never be an earth-worm or a book-worm, father," said Jessie brightly, turning to him, with a whimsical smile.

"Not I, my darling," he exclaimed, with that sudden and recognisably pleasant light coming for one instant into his eyes, as he glanced at his daughter's upturned face.

It faded as quickly as it came.

"Mary, I think I must speak to Harbuckle for a moment or two. Perhaps I'd better say good-night to you all now."

"You'll be round to breakfast?" asked Mary.

"Well—" and he hesitated.

"Oh, yes, do come!" said the others in chorus.

"Well—I think you'd better not expect me to-morrow. You see," he added pleasantly, "that now I'm living in the City I am in the position of the proverbial early bird; and of course, you know, it's the duty of the early bird to pick up the first crumb. I'm hoping to secure a particularly fine large crumb to-morrow morning before the other birds get to town. Good-night! Good-night!" And he sprang up a few stairs; then stopped an instant to call back to Mrs. Bayliss: "The girls look very nice, don't they, Mary? They do you credit; they are the only nice girls I've seen this evening, or indeed since I've returned. Good-night!"

Arthur Bayliss slackened his speed before he reached the flight of stairs leading to John Harbuckle's new den.

John Harbuckle heard his foot on the stairs and opened the door.

"Are you at work?" asked Arthur Bayliss, looking towards the open door by which Harbuckle was standing.

"Come in," said the bachelor, slowly measuring out the two syllables.

"Thanks."

"I have been looking out some prints of Old London I thought would interest Alison," said John Harbuckle, removing an armful of papers from the chair that was standing near his own. "Sit down, Bayliss."

"Thanks," Bayliss repeated, taking the proffered chair, while John Harbuckle placed the prints and papers on the top of an already overcrowded bureau, turning his back upon his visitor as he did so.

"What am I to do about my daughter?"

Arthur Bayliss hurried out the words, purposely avoiding the name "Jessie."

"In what way?" asked John Harbuckle, arranging the papers so that they might not topple over, as they seemed inclined to do, his back turned to Bayliss while he did so.

"She hasn't heard yet of Arnold Birkett. I can't tell her. It's an absolute impossibility! I can't tell her."

"You wish me to do so?"

Two or three loose pages fluttered to the floor. John Harbuckle stooped and picked them up.

"She must know. She'll be coming round to the office. She'll think she ought to live with me. She mustn't come without the others. Yes—if you would tell her you would be doing me a great service."

"How much am I to tell her?" asked John Harbuckle, turning slowly away from the bureau.

"I must leave it to you. As little as possible—not all about her poor mother."

"No, her memory must be kept sacred!"

"I leave it to you. You can understand—you do, I am sure—how anxiously I wish to appear not worse than I am in her eyes. Impress upon her (and I shall be able to second you there) how earnestly I am hoping and striving to do what is possible in the way of reparation."

"I will do my best. You will leave her here then for the present?"

"If you and Mary will allow it. And of course you will let me meet her expenses."

"We will take up that subject another time," said John Harbuckle curtly.

"You will tell her to-morrow? I am anxious to have it settled at once."

"To-morrow, if possible. You are sure you can't tell her yourself? It would be better if you could, far better."

"I cannot; that is, I might be laid up again for a fortnight if I did; and I can't afford that just now."

"Very well; I will do it."

"Thank you, Harbuckle. It will be a service I could ask of no other man."

"I regret you did not ask my help years ago; but sorrow is useless now. Are you going? Good night."

They shook hands very gravely, without any warmth on either side; for although Arthur Bayliss would have been glad to put much gratitude into his grasp, he felt it would meet with no response—and then they parted coldly; but could those men have been compelled to answer truly to the question, "Who is the one man in the world in whom you take the deepest interest?" their answer would have been: "Arthur Bayliss"—"John Harbuckle."

That night Arthur Bayliss avoided Catherine Court as he returned to his rooms. John Harbuckle, although his eyes were dry, wept long and bitterly in his heart.

Yet the following morning he was glad when he saw the two girls together at breakfast, and thought that Jessie was to be spared to them a little longer.

There was a note for Jessie that morning, as there had been every morning since she had been in London; but to-day it must have been a more delightful note than usual, so rosy and happy she looked.

We are permitted to know the contents of that note; but although we might use our liberty, I think we ought to respect Mac's terms of endearment; so we will leave them all out. Of course, neither Mac nor Jessie would have liked our profane eyes to rest upon those sacred epithets which a stranger's glance must needs in some fashion rob of their charm. But neither Mac nor Jessie would have cared for all the world's knowing the special cause for gladness which had made the writer, to quote his own words, "the happiest being in creation." Poor Mac! He was miserable enough by the time those written words of his were making Jessie Bayliss the happiest girl in the City of London!

"Expect me as the clock strikes eleven!" wrote Mac. "We are going through to Paris. It is quite a sudden move. I have persuaded him to let me have a day in London, on purpose to see you. I have so much to talk to you about that I must have a long day to get through it in. You won't object, will you? Donaldson and I are getting on splendidly together. Nothing could well suit me better. I see Hope writ very large on everything. Remember, at eleven precisely to-morrow."

"To-morrow! which means, of course, to-day," said Jessie. "To-day is the to-morrow of yesterday! How glad I am I did not send that note. And what a sweet day it is! A perfect, perfect day! And Mac's to be here at eleven! Exactly as the clock strikes

eleven! I must make the place look very charming; and myself too! Dear old Mac! It is nine now! Only two hours, two very busy hours that will go by quickly, and exactly as the bugles sound at eleven there'll be Mac! Punctual?—of course he'll be punctual! The idea of Mac's not being punctual when he's coming to see me."

And in her own mind Jessie Bayliss began that "me" with a very large capital—a capital M that was just precisely of the very same size as the letter that stood first in Mac.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELEVEN PRECISELY.

A BONDED carman, whose van was standing before the door, sent up to request an interview with Mr. Harbuckle ("the governor," he called him) at the very minute when Jessie, having read her letter, was about to announce the wonderful news that Mac was coming at eleven.

John Harbuckle therefore went downstairs at once; the girls had finished breakfast before he returned, and Mary, who had had a grumbling letter from her tenant at Cauldknowe, was so full of her own affairs that she forgot to mention Jessie's at all; so John Harbuckle began business that day without hearing of Mac's expected visit.

"Now, Alison," said Jessie, all the housewife brightly dawning in her dewy hazel eyes, "now, Alison, there's a great deal to be done. We must go and drive auntie up to ordering a much better lunch than yesterday's. We must take all these plants out into the yard and wash them; we must have a regular fight against dust and smuts; you must go out and buy a great heap of flowers, and altogether we must freshen up the place a bit; for it's looking rather dingy; and really it's next to impossible to keep things clean here. Come along, let us get out those big blue jars into the yard, to begin with."

So down they both went to the landing and carefully inspected the broad-leaved plants, and then carried them out into the little triangular space hemmed in by high and smoke-begrimed walls, where they diligently sponged the india-rubber plants and aspidistræ.

It was a pretty sight to see those two girls at work in that little enclosure.

It was a great pity Uncle John did not happen to know they were there; but he was a good deal occupied that morning, and had other things to think of.

Presently, while Jessie was rearranging most of the furniture and knick-knacks in the drawing-room, Alison, obedient to her cousin's commands (and an engaged girl who is expecting her lover is an imperious despot, whose sway no unengaged girl would dare to

question ; Alison, too, was meek and ready to oblige even to a fault), first went out and lavished an unheard-of sum upon cut flowers, and then was driven out again, although the day was getting more than warm, to buy a fine new fern for the drawing-room table.

The drawing-room, by-the-by, was now glorious in new carpet and curtains, and had an odour of oriental incense hovering about it, instead of the smell of varnish, as in the days when John Harbuckle and his faithful Robbins used to work there.

By the time all these arrangements had been completed, by the time the neatest of Sarah Janes had been compelled to put on her snowiest cap and apron, by the time Jessie had afresh fluffed up her hair and changed her dress and made Alison tidy, by that time it was so nearly eleven that Jessie took her knitting into the drawing-room and sat down on the window seat to wait three or four minutes for Mac's coming.

She sat where she could see, by getting very close to the open window, a little piece of the road along which Mac was to come.

"He is in Tower Street by this time," she said ; "I've half a mind to go and meet him. But no, it won't do ! one must maintain a certain amount of dignity. They are always far too conceited, it never does to let them know quite how fond one is of them. Dear old Mac has perhaps as little of that sort of nonsense about him as any man can have ; but it wouldn't do ; indeed, I'm not quite certain whether I haven't let him have his own way too easily ; but then I really am very fond of Mac, and he's had so many other worries. I wonder, now, is he turning round the corner by Barking Alley ?"

And Jessie put her head out of the window as far as she safely could.

"Two minutes to eleven ; I thought by his note he meant to be punctual to the moment. I don't see him anywhere ; perhaps he has come the other way ; perhaps he is the other side of the warehouses where I can't see him."

Passers-by were looking at her ; she drew in her head.

"One minute to eleven."

She stealthily approached the window again, and again looked along the road.

"He's evidently not going to be quite punctual," she said ; "I thought he would be. Perhaps there is a block outside Cannon Street, if he has come by train ; or he's in a cab somewhere and can't get on."

Bugles from the Tower. The earliest clock striking eleven.

She put her head out of the window again.

No sign of Mac. The latest clock struck eleven.

"He shouldn't have made so much fuss about being to the moment ; he should have said 'about eleven,'" thought Jessie, while a horrible pain shot through her heart.

Perhaps he would not come at all ; it seemed to her that disappointment would be unbearable.

"It's ridiculous to be disappointed so soon when the streets are in such a state," said Jessie. But she felt suddenly dull and lonely. Alison had discreetly kept away ; Jessie went in search of her.

"Was there a great block in Eastcheap when you were out just now, Alie ?" she asked.

"Frightful," said Alison ; "I saw several men get out of cabs and walk."

"Ah ! then I daresay that is what's keeping Mac late."

"Why, it's not five minutes past yet ! He is sure to be here directly."

"I can't bear to be kept waiting one instant," said Jessie, petulantly. "If I had been Mac I'd have come half an hour too early and have waited about until the hour was just going to strike !"

"Jessie, you forget Mac isn't quite a free man !"

"How can you remind me of such a thing ! What an abominable idea !"

"Well, but it's true ! Business is business, you know !"

"No, I don't know ; besides, isn't there a telegraph office in London ?"

"Well, perhaps his interesting companion has had a fit, and Mac is sending wildly for doctors."

"There goes the quarter past ! Oh, Alison, look out of the window, will you ? Be careful : not too far ! I wouldn't have him see either of us looking out for him upon any account ! Is he coming ?"

Poor Jessie, she tried hard to control her voice, but it trembled.

Oh ! this first keen pang of disappointment, how was it to be borne ? Alison had shaken her head ; Mac was not yet in sight.

"Did you look at the date of his note ; perhaps to-morrow means to-day's to-morrow ; no, it couldn't well mean that either. It was written in Scotland, wasn't it ?" suggested Alison, quite touched by Jessie's evident distress.

"Yes, yes ! There's no mistake about the time he meant. I shall go out. Why should I wait in ?"

"Well but, you know, all sorts of circumstances quite unforeseen"—began Alison.

"Oh, how I hate waiting !" exclaimed Jessie, and she retired to the drawing-room sofa, where she sat listening to every sound. There was the grinding of the heavy wheels, the noise of the City without, the summer breeze in the lace curtain near at hand, a street boy's shout now and again, the tread of feet beneath the window ; the half-hour chimed—but no Mac came.

Jessie turned her face to the wall and felt she could not endure it.

Yet she lay still, neither speaking to the others when they came in,

nor crying when they left. The three-quarters slowly came and passed, the long minutes dragged by, the bugles sounded from the Tower—the City clocks struck twelve.

Jessie sprang up and went into the dining-room.

"Alison, we'll go out! Come at once," she said, her usually pretty voice grown as set and hard as her features now looked.

They went upstairs and dressed.

"We won't go towards St. Paul's, Alie, we might meet him. Let us go some other way—along Fenchurch Street, perhaps?" said Jessie, as the two girls were on the doorstep. "No, there comes Uncle John, I don't want to see him; come a few steps the other way."

But Uncle John was already quite near. He and Alison had already recognised each other.

"He wishes to speak to us, I think," said Alison, and went towards him, Jessie following close behind.

"Going anywhere in particular?" asked Uncle John.

"No, merely for a walk," said Alison. "It is so fine; and in the City there's always a shady side."

"I rather wanted to speak to Jessie for a minute," said Uncle John uneasily. "What do you say? Can you spare me a minute?"

"As many as you like!" returned Jessie, as if minutes, hours, days, were now alike valueless to her.

John Harbuckle glanced at her for an instant, and perceived that there was something wrong.

"Then come into the office," he said, and they walked back together.

"I'll run up and speak to mother," said Alison. "I forgot to ask her if we could do anything for her."

"Yes, do, my dear," said John Harbuckle, as they re-entered the house.

An elderly clerk was at work in the office; John Harbuckle, however, although he did not indulge in a luxurious private room, had a counting-house to himself: not indeed furnished with comfortable chairs, after the manner of Arthur Bayliss's room in Fenchurch Avenue, but with an old-fashioned high desk, and tall stools to match it.

"Yes, Uncle John?" asked Jessie, as he closed the counting-house door.

"You don't look well," said John Harbuckle.

"My head aches," said Jessie quietly. Then making an effort to appear at ease she perched lightly on one of the high stools.

"Well, Uncle John, what is it?" she asked.

"I am afraid I may have to pain you," said John Harbuckle.

"You know why Mac hasn't come?" Jessie asked, with a strange look of sudden terror,

"I didn't know you were expecting him," said John Harbuckle; "were you?"

"He promised to be here at eleven, and now it's past twelve," said Jessie, simply but very miserably.

"Oh, he'll be here presently! Don't worry yourself about it, he's sure to come. He would have sent if he were not coming; he'll be here directly. It was about your father, Jessie, I wish to speak to you. You know he has been in very serious trouble, and still has many difficulties to contend with."

"I know," said Jessie, very clearly, but with a lower speech than usual. "I am very sorry. I must try to be all the kinder to him to make up for it."

"Indeed, he'll need all your help," said John Harbuckle, looking not at the slender young figure perched on the high stool, but at a page of an open account book. "A woman can help a man very much—you are too young to know how much."

"I thought I could guess, but perhaps I'm mistaken," said Jessie, a little drily.

"Don't worry yourself about the young man; he's coming, depend upon it," said Uncle John, with a slight smile.

"I'm not worrying myself," said Jessie.

The words had passed her lips before she could realise how untruthful they were.

"Tell me about my father," she went on nervously.

"There have been some very unhappy circumstances connected with your father's absence," began John Harbuckle; "crooked things it will be a hard task to make straight. There is much that can never be undone. But your father is an honourable man in the main, and with your help, Jessie, he may yet be able to put himself right, to a certain extent, in the eyes of the world. I am afraid it will not all be pleasant for you."

"I don't care for pleasantness," said Jessie; "I don't care what I do or what I go without if I can only make him happy again."

"I am afraid neither you nor anyone else will ever be able to do that; but you may help him to make the best of very sad circumstances. Men, you know, Jessie, look to women to encourage them in doing the difficult right," said John Harbuckle, opening another of the heavy books that lay on the high desk by which he was standing, and peering into it.

"Do they?" asked Jessie very softly, and her lips quivered a little. A strange, new feeling of responsibility touched her heart in spite of her distress and annoyance about Mac.

"Do these stronger, larger, rougher beings—these men—do they then depend so much on us? Is it true?" she asked herself. "Oh," almost breaking down with the thoughts, "I did mean to be good to Mac; I did indeed."

"Do they?" replied John Harbuckle. "Ah, Jessie, the right is

very hard for a man to do without some woman's support and sanction! You see," he went on with a certain wistfulness in his kindly smile, "you see what persons of importance you are."

"Yes," said Jessie, the tears gathering in her eyes, but not falling, "I'll try to be good, Uncle John. Tell me now, what is the matter?"

He never quite knew what he told her, or how he managed to make her understand about Arnold Birkett.

She listened in silence, colouring painfully; the colour grew hotter and hotter, until she felt the flush on her cheeks burning into them, and the tears had dried in her eyes.

She sat quite still for a minute, when John Harbuckle paused.

"I see it all," Jessie said presently, quite quietly; "I see it all now." The fire in her cheeks paled and paled, until it died, leaving an ashen hue behind. Then she came down from the high stool and turned towards the door.

John Harbuckle opened it for her. He did not look at her until she had passed him. He followed her into the hall and watched her go up the stone stairs, with one hand pressed against her heart and the other on the balusters, on which she leaned heavily. He watched her until she disappeared behind the baize door.

"Poor child, poor child!" he said; "I'm afraid—I'm afraid we've hurt her too much! I hardly thought she would have taken it so—she must have known a good deal of it all along! Poor darling, it has crushed her." And after waiting a moment or two, he cautiously went upstairs, and, having found Alison alone in the drawing-room, told her, under his voice, that Jessie did not seem well.

Alison ran upstairs to the bedroom. The door was locked. She came back at once.

"It's only about Mac, Uncle John," she said; "she's just disappointed, that's all. He's sure to come or send soon. But I'm very sorry! So nice as she'd made the place look, too! She'll be better alone. It will be all right when he comes."

"Well—perhaps so; but keep an eye upon her. I didn't like the look of her just now," and he silently withdrew.

Poor Jessie! She had gone slowly up the stone stairs and past the broad-leaved plants she had arranged that very morning with such care—never seeing them at all as she passed. Then she had, more slowly and heavily still, laboured up the next flight to her own room, locked the door, and dropped down on the bed, with her face against the pillows, moaning:

"O God!" she cried. "Let me die!—oh, let me die!"

It was all clear to her now: Mac had heard what she had heard, and Mac had left her; Arnold Birkett had driven him away from her! Mac would never come back to her any more.

Mac was not used to such things; he had never been mixed up with them. He had heard it all, and he was gone.

CHAPTER XXX.

SOON ?

It was a miserable luncheon without Mac and Jessie.

Mrs. Bayliss was grievously disappointed that Mac had not come ; disappointed on her own account as well as on Jessie's ; for she had taken a good deal of extra trouble about things, and was moreover longing to hear all about Birrendale and her tenants at Cauldknowe.

"What can have happened, mother ?" asked Alison, at table.

"I'm almost beginning to fear something serious," returned Mrs. Bayliss. "Mac Carruthers is far too impetuous a young man to be kept from carrying out a plan on which he has set his heart by any trivial hindrance."

"If it had been serious you would have been sure to have heard of it by this time. The most probable cause is that Donaldson has been giving him trouble, and that just at the time he ought to have started Mac was too much engaged with him either to be able to leave or send. You'll see him here presently with a very simple explanation. In the meanwhile I had better tell you that Jessie's distress is not wholly referable to his absence. I have had to tell her—her father commissioned me to tell her, and I suppose you are to be included—a piece of intelligence that has, together with this morning's disappointment, been too much for her."

Then he told them about Arnold Birkett.

They heard it in silence.

"Poor Jessie ! No wonder she is so distressed," said Alison, after a long pause ; but neither Alison nor her mother saw the connection between that unwelcome news and Mac's absence in the light in which Jessie saw it.

John Harbuckle was indisposed to talk or to discuss matters. He said what he had to say in the fewest words possible, and then went to his work again, Jessie's figure, which had suddenly looked as limp and powerless as if it had not one bone left in it, and the ashen grey of her face, haunting him all the way down to the East India Docks and back again.

The little household seemed totally disorganised.

Mrs. Bayliss sighed, sat with her hands folded, doing nothing, thinking, half with envy, of that other woman who had sacrificed herself and her conscience for her husband's sake, and wondering what she would have done had it been her James instead of his brother.

"Her conscience killed her ! I was right ; I said it ha!l. Would mine have killed me ?" She asked herself the question, but her mind wandered away from the answer.

Alison, who usually had plenty to occupy her, could find nothing

all the long afternoon except knitting to do. Books, Old London, the Tower, these things were not interesting to her to-day; her mind was too busy, and too oppressed.

She sat by the window, knitting, conscious that things were going wrong, wondering why Mac did not come, and watching every postman and telegraph boy she saw; hoping that at least there would be some message she could take up to Jessie.

But the little Japanese tea-table was set, and the tea made in one of Uncle John's Wedgwood pots, the wearisome afternoon was waning. Alison once more looked out of the window towards Barking Alley; the plane-trees were brown and dusty, the great space opposite the warehouses was growing empty, the working day was nearing its close, but there was no Mac anywhere, nor any message from him.

"It is very strange," said Alison to her mother. "Can he have suddenly disappeared like Uncle Arthur? Are we to lose him, too, for eight years? I'm so sorry for Jessie! I had better take her up some tea."

She poured out a cup, and took it upstairs.

"Jessie dear, do open the door, there's a darling!" she called, after she had gently tapped at the door.

She waited for an instant; there was no sound, no reply.

"Jessie! Jessie!" called Alison, "do speak to me!"

Alison, listening anxiously, thought she heard something like:

"Go away, please; I'm all right."

So she went downstairs again, feeling still more oppressed and troubled than before, but she little knew what a dreadful sense of the reality of her distress the sound of her voice had brought to Jessie.

Jessie had been lying there, so dazed, so stunned by the sudden blow, conscious that something terrible had happened, praying that she might be allowed to die at once, yet half hoping it was all but a hideous dream, until she had heard Alison calling; until the fear in Alison's voice, as she repeated her name, told her that her cousin, her family, all the world knew what had happened.

It was so terrible: the blow had struck her, but she had not died; there was the dreadful world of kind, pitying relatives to be faced; there they were calling, "Jessie! Jessie!" and the earth would not swallow her up and hide her from them; God would not let her die!

"And I was so fond of Mac. And he—yes, I'm sure of it—he was so fond of me. And now it's all over, it's all over! He has heard what I have heard, he is afraid of being mixed up with it. And if he hadn't stopped away—stopped away—how could he? Is it possible he could be so mean? I can't believe it of him! And yet what else can it be?—it must be that. But if he had come, I should have had to give him up. I must have given him up, I couldn't be a disgrace to him!—no, no, I couldn't be a disgrace to him! I couldn't let him be mixed up with such things; but he ought to have

known that ; he ought to have trusted me. Oh, he's been too cruel ; and I was so happy this morning ! I ought to have known something was going to happen when I was so happy, it is always so with me. Oh, Mac ! Mac ! Mac ! and I was so fond of you ; I meant to be so good to you ! I did, indeed—and—and I should have given you up for your good—only, only for your good—when I heard of that disgrace ; I would not have let it touch you—it would have broken my heart, but I would have done it ! you've been too cruel, there was no need to be so cruel ; I would have given you up ! ” And Jessie wept and sobbed, and wept and sobbed, until she could weep no more. Then she lay for a while quiet and exhausted, and presently fell asleep, “ sleeping for sorrow.”

Another post came, but it brought no tidings of Mac.

Jessie awoke.

The working day closed. Alison, restless, and tired of the tedious hours, stole upstairs again. “ Jessie, darling ! do let me in ; I really must come in,” she begged again, tapping at the door. She waited for a minute and then heard the lock turning. She opened the door. Jessie was slowly re-crossing the room to the washing-stand, where she had been sponging her face.

“ No letter has come ? ” Jessie asked quietly.

“ No,” said Alison, with extreme reluctance.

“ There will not be one,” said Jessie, with a hard distinctness most unnatural to her. “ It is all over.” She had evidently been packing up all the letters she had had from Mac, when Alison had interrupted her. She went to the toilet-table, and took up several which lay there, and put them one on the other very deliberately.

“ Jessie, you are not going to send them back ; that's absurd ! ” exclaimed Alison, looking at the letters.

“ You will allow me to know my own business,” said Jessie coldly, adding another letter to the pile.

“ Yes, yes, of course ; but wait, there may—indeed I think there must be an accident.”

“ There is no accident,” said Jessie, with decision.

“ No accident ! What do you mean ? ” asked Alison. “ You can't surely think that Mac, who is the soul of honour, deficient though he may be in some things, would wilfully disappoint you ? That is too wildly improbable.”

“ I have ceased to believe in honour among men,” said Jessie bitterly ; “ I believed in Mac with all my heart.”

“ Then you might have more confidence in him,” said Alison ; to whom there was still no connection between “ Arnold Birkett ” and Mac's non-appearance.

“ I am the better judge of that,” said Jessie.

Alison said nothing ; she changed her morning dress for the one she wore of an evening. Jessie felt, with a horrible tightening of the tension of her nerves, that she, too, must change her dress, and

appear as if, since she sat with the others at breakfast, all her life had not been ruined.

She felt it—it reminded her of that turning of the screw of the rack, the thought of which had often made her shudder when she had looked at the Tower.

"Then they racked limbs; now they rack hearts," she said to herself, taking up all the letters, and throwing them into the desk she kept them in, the letters she had kissed and fondled so tenderly.

She locked them up, changed her dress, arranged her hair and the details of her toilet as carefully as ever; the set look in her face brought tears into Alison's eyes, but Jessie had none in hers.

"Have you told her?" asked Arthur Bayliss, under his voice, coming into John Harbuckle's office as the books were being put away. He looked haggard and careworn, and altogether jaded.

"I have," returned Harbuckle, turning the lock of his iron safe.

"How did she take it?" Bayliss asked nervously.

"Badly. She was expecting the young man from Birrendale this morning, but he didn't come. I didn't know or I would not have told her to-day; the two things together were more than she could stand. We've hurt her very much."

"Where is she?" asked Bayliss with sudden agitation.

"I believe she has been in her room ever since."

"I must go to her," said Bayliss.

"Will it be wise?" asked John Harbuckle.

"I must go;" and without ceremony he ran upstairs.

"Mary, I hear Jessie is—is not well; which is her room?" he said, meeting Mary Bayliss on the landing.

"I'll go and tell her you're here."

"No, no—I'll go. She'll come to me."

Mary pointed out the room; he hurried up.

"Jessie, darling! are you ill?" he called, his voice trembling beyond control.

Jessie's voice was perfectly clear as she answered.

"No. Go into the drawing-room. I will come to you."

He went into the drawing-room; Mrs. Bayliss saw him there, but was wise enough to leave him alone.

He walked about restlessly for a minute or two, and then Jessie came in.

He stopped and looked at her as she slowly moved towards him.

Her face was pallid, her eyelids heavy, her beautiful lips as pale as if they had been chiselled by a sculptor. He was frightened, almost terror-stricken, he could hardly go to meet her.

She came nearer, he moved a step or two, he took her in his arms, bent over her and kissed her tenderly.

"My darling, you have been pained! I was obliged to let you know or I would have kept it from you," he whispered.

"I have been pained," she said distinctly, slipping away from him.

"I am sorry your Mac should not have come to-day. He will be here presently," said Jessie's father soothingly.

"He will never be here any more," said Jessie with calm despair, turning away.

"Don't think that! Don't think that! Of course he'll come!—why shouldn't he?"

"He didn't know I was Arnold Birkett's daughter when we were engaged; he knows it now," said Jessie, slowly and clearly, but without turning to her father.

She sat down at some distance from him—her head still averted. Her father, quite unprepared for this turn, was utterly staggered.

"Knows! How can he know?" he asked, after a long pause.

"I am sure he does," said Jessie; "that is why he has not come."

"If so, he's a cad, a cad you're well rid of!" exclaimed Arthur Bayliss. The contemptuous word and tone roused Jessie. She came to her father with bowed head and outstretched arms. "I belong to you! I belong to you now!" she sobbed, her head sinking on his shoulder. "And—and"—with tears—"I'll be kind to you—I will, indeed; I've nobody else to be good to now!"

He led her to the sofa and let her weep on.

"Why did I come back to trouble you?" he asked presently.

"Don't—don't say that; I am glad you've come, indeed, indeed I am!" cried Jessie.

"I'm not," said he. "My darling, don't cry so—you'll hurt yourself! Look up—look up, dear. I've had a good day; I've made a great deal of money, more than I ever made before in one day. If I could make as much every day all would soon be righted—all that can be righted. He doesn't know, depend upon it, he doesn't! Don't quite break my heart, Jessie; look up—encourage me a little, Jessie; it will all be righted!"

"Soon?" she asked, raising her head.

"Soon?"—and the sight of her quivering lips made his own tremble—"soon? My child, how can I tell?"

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BAKING OF THE OAT-CAKES.

ALISON awoke that night to find Jessie sitting by the window.

"Do try to sleep!" she said.

"I can't; I shall never sleep any more," replied the voice from the window.

"But you might be resting," suggested Alison.

"I can rest nowhere," Jessie said, neither wildly nor tearfully, but with quiet sadness.

Alison said no more, she lay still, praying.

Alison, not being in love with Mac, had more faith in him than Jessie had. This was strange, but it is a thing that often happens. Jealousies and suspicions are born of affection. Alison felt that it would be contrary to Mac's nature to do a base or cruel thing; Jessie, since she had heard of Arnold Birkett, had believed that Mac had left her—that Mac had feared to be mixed up with discreditable affairs and had left her.

In the silence of the summer night, as she sat there by the window in the moonlight, there gradually came into her mind—not very distinctly, but with profound solemnity—the feeling that *Mac had gone out of existence.*

She tried to think of him as somewhere, but could not.

"Perhaps he's dead—perhaps, while I have been thinking cruel thoughts about him, he is lying dead."

But her mother was dead, yet she always felt that mother was somewhere in heaven; she came to her in dreams. And then, it may have been that the moonlight, streaming on to the floor, brought back that stormy night at Birrendale when she had dreamed of her mother's smile—she thought of the placid happiness that had touched her then, and felt that if Mac were gone away to that mysterious land, he would be free to make her know by some slight token that he still thought of her there.

To-night she only felt that Mac was gone; gone completely, as if he had ceased to exist, as if he had been blotted out of creation.

Not crudely, as I have been obliged to put it down, did Jessie feel this, but they weighed heavily on her mind, those words:

"Mac is gone."

The wheels of time seemed to stand still for her, so slowly they turned; but, imperceptible as was their movement, at length the day dawned, the early toilers began their work, the light carts rattled over the stones, the strong horses laboured up the hill with the heavy vans, and Jessie, tired out, crept back to Alison and fell asleep.

Yet she awoke about the usual time. Hope sprang up afresh; there might be a letter. She dressed, and went downstairs. There was no letter.

Her father came round to breakfast. She tried to appear cheerful; but they all looked dreadful to her; she fancied that all were thinking:

"Poor Jessie! Mac's left her."

Then came more waiting, and more waiting; and then again it struck eleven, then it was a quarter past.

"Yesterday," thought Jessie, remembering how impossible it had seemed to wait even a minute, "yesterday I felt I couldn't wait one instant, now I know I can; but what pain! ah, what pain!"

Her father came in to lunch—to dinner—he spent the evening there. She sat with him for an hour in the gardens of the square—an interminable hour to her.

The last fortnight had been excessively hot. Mrs. Bayliss had for some days been thinking about the sea-side, for the front rooms of the house were now obliged to be furnished with outside blinds, and were even then oppressive. The plane tree that stands on the site of the gallows tree of the bad old days was dusty and brown; the broad pavement in front of the Trinity House glared white in the heat.

"John," said Mrs. Bayliss to her brother, when they were alone, while Jessie and her father were out of doors, "under the circumstances, the best thing we can do is to take her down to the sea for a change."

"I'm afraid she'll take her trouble with her," said John; "however, as far as I'm concerned, I should be very willing for you to take the girls. Her father may, however, have something to say in the matter."

"Oh, I can manage that. He will be sure to take my advice," said Mrs. Bayliss. "It will be the best thing for her."

"I am not so certain," said John; "but it is no longer a question for me to decide, you must ask her father."

"She wants change—both the girls want change," said Mrs. Bayliss.

"Indeed, mother, I don't," said Alison. "I shall pine away if you take me out of the City. And as for its being hot here, why there's always a shady side to all the streets; and no place can be interesting to me in comparison with London, east of the West end where, I'll admit freely, the interest pretty nearly ceases."

"You're a genuine Harbuckle, Alison; there's not much of the Bayliss in you, unfortunately. I'm afraid you're more like your grandparents——"

"Why 'afraid,' mother?" interrupted Alison; "they were all very good people."

"Oh, yes, of course, very good people, and I was very fond of them," said their daughter testily; "but they had no—I can hardly express what I mean, there was something lacking in them, they had no social ambition, no—in fact, they were content to be simple citizens. The Baylisses are so different. That's what I like in Jessie; she is such a thorough Bayliss; I do wish, Alison, that you were. I'm sure I don't know what is to become of you!"

"Oh, Mary, you needn't trouble yourself about Alison's future! But I think, if Jessie's father will consent to it, you'd better all of you go to the sea-side for a little while," said Uncle John.

"Well, when will you be able to take us, John?" asked the widow.

"Take you, my dear! That is quite another thing. I'll come down and see you from Saturday until Monday, if you like, but as for staying a whole week at the sea-side, why, I should be dead by the end of it," said John Harbuckle.

"Is it possible for Arthur Bayliss to spare the time? It's so dull alone," said Mary.

"He can't get away just now. There's a run on shellac. Mincing

Lane's gone mad. I hope Bayliss will make his fortune. He couldn't possibly leave just now."

"Was there ever a business man who *could* get away when the women of his family wanted him?" asked Mary. "No! My poor James was always ready to take us anywhere! And I must say I hate going about alone."

"But there are the girls to go with you," suggested John mildly.

"The girls!" retorted the widow; "I love them dearly, but how can I make companions of girls? I've always been used to the attention of men," and her tone implied, "I can't get accustomed to doing without it."

"I am sorry, Mary," said John; "but really I can only offer you the choice of staying here or going with the girls."

"That's a subterfuge quite unworthy of you, John!" exclaimed Mary, with some temper.

"Not at all!" said he quietly.

"Why don't you speak out the honest truth," said Mary with a sneer; "why don't you say that we bore you, that you couldn't tolerate our society for a whole week!"

"Such an assertion would be so much more than the truth that it would be more like falsehood. Not your society, my dear, but the seaside for a week would be the infliction I could not reasonably hope to survive," said John Harbuckle.

"There, there, John!—say no more about it! We won't go, that's decided! We'll stay here and be suffocated! I thought that you, at least, would have had some feeling for poor Jessie if for no one else!" and Mary Bayliss took up the evening paper and began to read it with great avidity.

There was something peculiarly irritating just then in the expression Mrs. Bayliss managed to put into her colourless eye-lashes as she read.

John Harbuckle could not stand it, so retired to his den; but, not being able to settle to work, he and Alison went out on an exploring expedition.

Retributive justice, however, tracked down the nefarious old bachelor; he had to suffer for his atrocious conduct in disregarding his sister's wishes. That very evening the weather changed. The British Isles were visited by one of those sudden atmospheric depressions which have of late years recurred so frequently that we now expect to be wearing our warmest winter clothing for a few weeks in the middle of summer.

That sudden and extreme change was accompanied by heavy rains and a violent gale.

John Harbuckle, the man who refused to take his sister to the seaside, had to go down to Deal all by himself, to look after a ship that had been badly damaged.

Someone was glad he had to go—that someone was Jessie

Bayliss. He had carefully avoided the slightest expression of pity or anxiety, but she felt them all the same. It was a relief to her that he was obliged to go.

Perhaps, too, it was a relief to him; perhaps, after all, he was glad to be called away; but if so, what becomes of the retributive justice theory? In which, it may be added, Mrs. Bayliss implicitly believed.

It was Wednesday when Jessie had expected Mac at eleven precisely. The remainder of the week was spent, more or less, in misery by the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the British Isles. Invalids who had been lingering on during the fine weather, infants, and old people dropped off; dyspeptics sank into abject wretchedness.

Shellac, which had been running up at a wonderful rate for some time past, fell as suddenly as the barometer; not that the weather had anything to do with it, but that it so happened the two falls were simultaneous. The last thing John Harbuckle heard before he left town was that one of the speculators had committed suicide.

The girls could not go out. They worked away at winter socks (for they knitted as quickly as if born north of the Tweed), Jessie's to be for her father, and Alison's for Uncle John. But the time dragged on slowly, and still more slowly, until the only two things that seemed certain were that the end of the week would never come, and that it would never leave off raining.

On Friday afternoon, Alison was sitting by one rain-washed window knitting and reading, and Jessie was at the other window knitting, with a book upon her lap, but not reading, only thinking: when would the horrible suspense end, when would this dull pain give place to sharper agony or sudden joy; when should she know the worst?

Mrs. Bayliss had been hemming some of those muslin bands which form so conspicuous a part of the insignia of widowhood, but had fallen asleep in the arm-chair, under the very eye of the grandfather with the Lord Mayor's collar of S.S. Within the room there was not the slightest sound, except the hurried ticking of the old-fashioned clock, with the mahogany roof shaped like a pagoda.

Presently Jessie felt a sob rising that nothing except the promptest action could conquer. She sprang up, put down the book and knitting, went to the other window and nestled against Alison, as if for warmth.

"Isn't it wet? Birrendale wasn't wetter," Jessie said under her voice.

Alison looked out of the wet window, to the wet trees, the wet vans, the wet carmen, the wet Tower beyond, dimly seen through the drenching rain.

"Cold and grey and wet, oh, how wet!" Alison said, shuddering.

"There's only one thing that I could really enjoy," said Jessie, in a more natural voice, as if suddenly returning on her own self; "I could enjoy sconing and oat-caking. Couldn't you, now? What a comfort it used to be at Cauldknowe! I do miss the kitchen fire so

much! I suppose you couldn't beard that lioness in her den for me, could you?" she added with an appealing little whine.

"What *couldn't* I do for you?" exclaimed Alison. "Name that thing."

"You were always a tackler and a backer up!" said Jessie. "I shall always give you credit for those two great qualities. Will you tackle that lioness?—will you back me up if I invade the 'department,' as Uncle John calls it? I can't stand this any longer; I shall cry directly, if you don't take me into the kitchen."

"Not another word!" said Alison, putting her finger mysteriously to her lips. "Victory or Westminster Abbey!" and drawing Jessie's arm within her own, she marched boldly to the attack.

But in a very few minutes the brave girls returned crestfallen. The lioness had shown more teeth and tongue than they had been prepared for; they had been shamefully routed. The noise of their precipitate retreat aroused the slumberer in the arm-chair.

Mrs. Bayliss heard their indignant complaints. She recognised the opportunity for which she had for some days been waiting. She arose, struck one decisive blow; the tyrant met a tyrant's fate: that very evening they all went to bed, free, but cookless. Mrs. Robbins's third successor had departed.

Saturday, a day of brown fog, found them busy, but comparatively happy, for even Jessie began to think hopefully, as she deftly kneaded up the oatmeal in that simple primitive way, so unattainable to the Londoner, even Jessie began to fancy that if Mac really cared for her, which she thought must be the case, and if she really cared for him, of which she had now not the slightest doubt, why, then, things would come right after all. In the meanwhile her father had never tasted oat-cakes of her own making, and so—throwing a "quarter" carefully off her pretty hands on to the hot girdle—and so it was pleasant to be able to be free to make them once more.

"How very strange I should be feeling that anything is pleasant," Jessie said, returning to the board for another quarter-cake.

"And I think you'll say I've built up just a lovely arrangement for 'firing them,'" said Alison, who had been engaged in front of the stove for some minutes. (Oat-cake, you must know, is first baked on the girdle, and then slightly browned in front of the fire.) "You bake, Jessie, and I'll fire. Look, what with this hanger and these two flat irons, I've an excellent substitute for that brander we were stupid enough to leave behind us at Cauldknowe. Now, have you some baked? There, what could be better? What, they won't stand up, won't they? But they shall. I'll wrastle with them—as McQuade used to say—and I'll conquer them; never fash yourself, my dear!"

"That's capital," said Jessie, laughing. ("How very curious I should laugh," she said to herself.) "Here, Alison, these on the girdle are done now; but this meal doesn't seem just like the meal

we had in Birrendale. How very strange I should be taking an interest in these things," Jessie added inwardly.

"Now, Alison, they're all done to a turn. I wonder, will my father be just delighted with them?—Aren't they neat now?" she asked quite gleefully, as Alison stood the last quarter up on end to cool.

Jessie spoke gleefully, but Alison looked rather sharply at her, and moved a step nearer to her.

"And how very strange it is that I should be quite happy again, and not care for Mac in the least! How very, very strange!" said Jessie to herself, and suddenly all the world grew blank and her head sank upon Alison's shoulder; Jessie had fainted away.

(To be continued.)



TO MY MOTHER.

(FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.)

IN one mad hour I left my home and thee :
I said, "Now will I roam the wide world over
To see if I this Love may yet discover ;
That I may cling to Love full lovingly."
I sought for Love in vain o'er land and sea,
At every portal stretching empty palms,
To beg, for pity's sake, Love's poorest alms ;
And scorn and hate were all men gave to me.
So every day I maddened more and more
For Love, yet found not Love at any door :
Heart-sick and weary, home again I past.
Then camest thou, my mother, forth to meet me,
And there within thine eyes, lit up to greet me,
There shone the sweet, the longed-for Love at last.

PAUL ENGLAND.

THE LOOKER-ON.

"Truth is truth
To the end of reckoning."—*Measure for Measure*.

A LOOKER-ON, in life and in letters, the associate on equal terms with the eminent men of a time when to be distinguished was the rule rather than the exception, Maxime Du Camp was better able to give a clear and trustworthy view of his surroundings than most biographers: his gallery of portraits, as rare as it is interesting, is conspicuous for firm and vivid delineations, owing nothing to the popular process of *touching up*.

To read the "Recollections" is to become acquainted with minds far above the average, to be made aware of talents, qualities, characteristics, successes, failures, with a certainty strongly opposed to the present false and futile fashion, described by Max Müller as "taking out all the lines and wrinkles, so that nothing remains but the washed out faces of angels."

Very ill-advised are the critics who, disinclined to look painful truths in the face, have accused Flaubert's faithful biographer of disparaging his literary work on account of his mental condition. But Maxime, we may believe, was guided by no *mauvaise inspiration*, so called by Guy de Maupassant, but by a sincere endeavour to establish the author's fame on its rightful basis; a talent unique, almost unrivalled, but overborne at times by the terrible malady which, during some years of his life, confused his most brilliant conceptions, and obscured his natural sense of perspective and proportion.

Now when Guy de Tours, a devoted follower of Ronsard in light and tender poetry, ventured to define Genius as a *nervous disease*, he brought down upon himself a storm of horror and wrath; but if the question comes to be soberly considered, we find that exceptionally gifted men are frequently not very healthy men. It would seem that exalted imagination is fostered at the cost of a certain degree of mental balance. It has been called the "very eye of the soul," and leads therefore into trackless paths; whilst the mysterious magnetism for which there are no explanatory words, but which undoubtedly exists and must be employed to obtain outside sympathy, cannot be lavished without effort, exciting a nervous strain which must impair by degrees the healthy tranquillity of the ordinary conditions of life.

It is Maxime's knowledge of this fact which has given rise to a

false impression—a cruel accusation of friendship betrayed—the more regrettable since the time has come when no words of denial can be spoken and no forgiveness given—should there be any need of forgiveness.

As a matter of fact there were no revelations, and nothing told that had not been already told over and over again. It would have been impossible to conceal an affliction causing brain disturbance, and no honest biographer could pass it over as immaterial, or forbear to notice its results.

"*Cette maladie a brisée sa vie*," wrote Maxime, and no truer verdict ever was pronounced or with more heartfelt sorrow for its necessity.

It was whilst still in the prime of life that Flaubert began to fail. His head was troubled after the first attack, which he always imagined had taken place in the night, and of which he was only conscious from its exhausting effects. The composition once so easy became laborious; the task he loved a source of fatigue and distress; he would write and rewrite pages, growing more and more weary and dissatisfied; the intellect, once so critical, was forced into extravagance, or lost in bewilderment and fruitless reverie; he seemed as if floating in a dream, losing all interest in what went on around him.

In sad contrast to the first years of his manhood, when his strength was that of a giant and his vitality apparently inexhaustible, when long hours of work and study seemed to have no effect on a frame of iron and only left the mind more fresh and vigorous, he would remain for hours, after his first seizure, in a state of somnolence, as if completely detached from every detail of earthly existence. His memory, which had been extraordinarily tenacious, was no longer clear. Whilst fully aware of his failure of mental power, and morbidly sensitive to its indications, he would shut himself up within the four walls of his writing room, refusing to join in the routine of common domestic life, but still toiling on at works of fiction and even more laborious productions.

This state of things could not but be visible to all, and when notified by Maxime it was with the deepest sympathy and compassion. Bound up as he was himself in the interests of their common profession, with him the *glory* of an author was the thing of supreme importance, and he had no hesitation in affirming the influence of physical suffering on mental power, a decay undermining talents he had been the first to perceive and recognise.

One thing is very certain, that no literary rivalry nor any shadow of antagonism ever existed between companions who for the first years of their life had been inseparable, who had shared each other's hopes, ambitions, illusions. Their mutual affection was expressed in the strongest possible terms, and in addition to early associations—almost constant vicinity, the same social position—they were above all united by their joint worship of letters.

"Under all chances and changes," wrote Maxime, at the close of the very chapter which has been so obviously misunderstood, "each was ready to prove that nothing could alter the old attachment: I admired Flaubert passionately; his glory satisfied my ambition, and the applause he met with for his books was one of the greatest satisfactions of my life."

The two friends, with Louis Bouilhet, Louis de Cormenin, and a few no less ardent enthusiasts, formed a select coterie far from the toils and troubles of ordinary existence. It was a little *cénacle* in which no question of history, philosophy, poetry, was left untouched; and although the great leaders had ceased to speak, their successors maintained to the last the same lofty aims and lyric ardour. With them, as with the old Romanticists, the mystic watchword *l'art pour l'art* was held in all its first sincerity and significance—a dedication, almost a religion. "*Heures charmantes à jamais envolées*," sighed Maxime, when, only a few years later, of all these young and brilliant spirits, he alone remained.

Goethe affirmed that true friendship could only exist by *keeping the same pace*; and Flaubert and Maxime Du Camp were never far from each other, in the same path, and with the same goal in view; but on almost every other point no two human beings could be more dissimilar.

Flaubert vehement, impetuous, of untiring intellectual activity, was quaintly described by Edmond de Goncourt as ready armed for warfare with celestial spheres; whilst Maxime, noted for temperate views and sober common sense, was never ruled by impulse, and came, as it were, by nature to safe and sane conclusions.

Hence much difference of thought and many a literary battle, which never in the least degree disturbed their mutual confidence and liking.

Flaubert's associates were his unsparing critics. They must have wounded the susceptibilities of any writer, and it is recorded that when his carefully constructed phrases—harmonious possibly, but far too florid—his unending mysteries and unexpected metaphors were all too roughly handled, the indignant author turned upon his friends, and, as they afterwards affirmed, "*ne ménageait pas ses imprécations*."

But many of the works thus ruthlessly condemned found better appreciation later on; and the "*Tentation de St. Antoine*" that Louis Bouilhet would have consigned to ashes, has since been cited as a masterpiece. Wild and unintelligible as it must have appeared in its first stages, it was in fact colossal; dealing intelligently with all creeds and superstitions, a search into the very depths of mind, and a very marvel of patient erudition.

The literature of his country owes much to Gustave Flaubert, for he wrote on with labour and painstaking at a moment when the French language was threatened with an irruption of carelessness and vulgarity; when Michelet said in a sort of despair, "*tous les encriers*

ont de la tendance à s'encanailler." With all the vehemence of his nature he opposed such a disaster, insisting, in season and out of season, on a scrupulous polish and ornamentation, always the distinguishing mark of the best French style.

But much as he upheld the highest principles of his profession, he was often tempted to employ a singular licence on his own account—another source of difference with Maxime. Every writer, he would argue, is free, according to the needs of his subject, to accept or reject arbitrary precepts, and that the sole law which 'must not be broken was the law of harmony. He would quote George Sand as sharing this opinion, and what perfection of phraseology could compete with her own? On this principle grammatical rules were sometimes sacrificed as incompatible with the music of words: he would resolutely ignore harsh terminations, when Maxime, past patience, would exclaim—"but for your glory's sake show some respect for the Subjunctive Mood!"

Another of Flaubert's theories was no less distasteful to his critics. He laid it down that what a writer has to say is of little importance compared with the manner of saying it, and with his usual extravagance would assert that a well-turned sentence having no real significance is superior to one which is also faultless, but full of meaning—therefore, he would maintain, prosaic. He believed in the potency of the *phrase écrite*; in combinations of words so exquisite as to be all-sufficient; and he would sit for hours at his writing-table, his head buried in his hands, seeking for the word—the only word—which could satisfy him.

Paul Bourget, deeply psychological critic, attempts to explain this proposition by describing Flaubert as a visionary in search of the positive and absolute: who, since neither could be found in a world of chance and change, had lost himself in the vain endeavour to reach the essence of phraseology.

In the midst of harassing delusions, the versatility of Flaubert's talents is remarkable in his letters to his friends, unstudied models of affection. Those to George Sand are full of charm. No son could have been more tender to that marvellous and many-sided woman, whose free and independent nature he understood better perhaps than most of her contemporaries. She had sent him pictures of her grandchildren, and he writes: "*Ah, comme ils sont gentils! quels Amours! quelles bonnes petites têtes sérieuses et douces!*"

Here we have before us the real Flaubert, gentle, tender, and sympathetic, justifying the assertion that no one loved his friends so well, or was more beloved by them.

It is much to be regretted that the letters which passed between Flaubert and Maxime Du Camp in the first youth of both, touching on all the stirring events of the day, and full of names which can never be heard without emotion, were destroyed by mutual consent. When Mérimée's "*Lettres à une Inconnue*" were given to the world

after his death—he so reserved, so self-contained, so averse to vulgar comment!—the friends resolved to make a similar act of treason impossible in their own case, but the deprivation to lovers of literature can hardly be measured. The inner self of each would then have been revealed, and no doubt could ever be thrown on the warmth and faithfulness of a friendship less rare and more unquestionable perhaps in their day than in our own.

In the calm solitude of Croisset, Flaubert's delightful home in Normandy, good work was done together all day and very often half the night. They were undisturbed by rumours from the outer world, with which they had nothing to do, and even remained in ignorance of the threatened revolution in Paris, until they were joined by Alfred le Poitevin who, in the midst of a fierce literary discussion, casually remarked that Louis Philippe would do wisely to purchase a *chalet* on the Lake of Geneva. At first they took but little heed of the terror and confusion of the time, looking on, as they said, from the artistic point of view.

Du Camp had never taken any part in politics: they failed to attract him, and he was heard to say very frankly that he thought statecraft a dishonest trade, and public opinion—quoting Carlyle—the greatest lie in the world. He would say that he had always been struck with the curious fact that Republicans believe in a Republic, but not in Republicans, and Monarchists in a Monarchy, but not in a Monarch.

At last, however, there came a time, with the Second Empire, when literature ceased to be a vocation, and when everybody wanted to represent the people. The list of candidates for the Assembly was astounding, and caused Maxime the loss of his most cherished illusions. Art was no longer the supreme charm and interest of life; and Flaubert—even Flaubert—became a politician and applied for a post at the Embassy; Louis Bouilhet, who was supposed to be able to speak only in rhyme, canvassed for votes in unmistakable prose; Lamartine was styled "fashionable revolutionary tenor"; and Victor Hugo—sovereign poet of the world—accepted office as Maire d'arrondissement!

The calm judgment of the looker-on became daily more manifest as time passed, disclosing the futility of petty strifes and ambitions. Fettered by no schemes for personal advantage, his chief interest always belonged to the fortunes of his friends, although his own ability was not less, if hardly so conspicuous; and to the end of his days he knew nothing more desirable than a life devoted to art. It might be a hard struggle at times, in some cases, and the very chance of chances—this he admitted, since nothing can be more obvious than the fact that literature happens to be the only employment for which wages are not given in proportion to the value of the work; but he affirmed that ample repayment is to be found in so sure a refuge from petty cares.

That he sympathised with those less independent of the freaks of fortune is apparent in every line of the work devoted to the companions of his life, the greater number of whom he had the misfortune to survive.

On the death of Flaubert, Maxime summed up in a few eloquent and heartfelt words his own conviction and the concert of public opinion: that the author of "*Madame Bovary*" and "*Salammbô*" was a writer of the first order, an incomparable stylist, the chief of a school; and that the artist within him would have been without a flaw had it not been for the baneful influence of a too highly-strung organisation whose bounds were easily overstepped.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

A LOVE LYRIC.

I COULD not grasp my freedom, dear,

If you should set me free—

Some day of days confess yourself

A-wearying of me:

I could not loose the thousand chains

Your life round mine has knit,

For Love has ta'en my very soul

And forged them into it.

Some hearts can hold a score of loves,

I know not how 'tis done;

Mine full to overflowing is,

And yet it holds but one:

One that its seal upon my life

Eternally must fix,

And with no other lesser loves

Can ever fuse or mix.

God give me strength to hold you, dear,

For ever wholly mine;

Through gleam of sun and gloom of shade

Let soul and spirit twine;

That those bewailing Love and Faith

As myths long scourged and dead,

See in our lives how blest two hearts

In holiest union wed.

ANNIE G. HOPKINS.

THE SWEET POWER OF MUSIC.

BY F. L. PLUNKET.

HE was a professor, and her cousin—though a very distant cousin. If he had not been her cousin it might have made all the difference, but she had been accustomed to his devotion all her life, and she took it as a matter of course, as we take so many of the best things life has given us, without questioning our right to them. There was no reason why they should not marry, seeing the kinship was so far off. He was young, clever, people prophesied him a brilliant career, and he loved her—loved her with the chivalry and devotion of a bygone age.

Not very long ago he had sat with her under the same tree where they were sitting now, and pleaded with all the strength of his manhood for her love, "his life's set prize;" and through a cloud of darkness, which seemed to close round and engulf him, he had heard her answer—it could not be. She had tried with gentle tender words to soften the blow, the cruel weight of which she did not comprehend, and it was with utter unconsciousness of what she was asking that she had begged it might make no difference in their lives. "Mother would miss his visits so, if he stopped them. Could not things go on just as if nothing had happened?"

He was a strong man, or his heart might have quailed at the ordeal, but he loved her, and only his own heart knew at what cost "things went on as if nothing had happened."

But on this June morning he had come to tell her he was going away. He had been asked to go over to America and lecture on Browning, and might be away a year, perhaps longer. She had listened with eager interest to all his plans, rejoicing in this fresh honour of his, and painting in glowing colours the success and fame awaiting him in the new country.

"But how am I ever to manage my Browning lectures when you are away, Jim? I'm afraid there will be a sad falling off in my papers, and I shall swiftly take a modest place at the bottom of the class. That reminds me—I want you to read me 'The Last Ride.' I have to write a paper on it, and somehow, when you read Browning, I seem to see and understand his meaning so much better than when I read him by myself. I'll go and get the book now—no, don't stir, you would not know where to look for it."

She rose from her chair and crossed the little strip of grass to the house. His eyes followed her graceful figure until it disappeared into the darkness of the open door. Then he buried his face in his

hands and groaned. But when she came back there was nothing to show that a fierce battle had been fought; May only thought how restful and cool he looked lying under the shade of the lime tree.

"This is the one spot where life is bearable to-day," she said throwing him the book, and sinking into a wicker chair. "Even going that little step to the house, I feel as if I had walked through a burning fiery furnace. I feel scorched, frizzled up, while you look as cool as the proverbial cucumber."

The man gave a little gasp, but she was settling the cushions behind her head and she heard nothing.

There was a short pause as he turned over the pages, and only the monotonous drone of the bees overhead broke the stillness.

"I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all my life seemed meant for fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave; I claim
Only a memory of the same,
And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me."

There was a scarcely perceptible huskiness in the man's voice as he read the first lines of the poem, but as the verses went on his voice steadied. The tenderness and passion of striving, and the magnificent defiance of failure, the determination to make the best of life,

"All labour, yet no less,
Bear up beneath their unsuccess,"

were given with a strength and beauty worthy of the lines. Few people can read Browning well, but Jim was one of the few, and to-day he was inspired. May sat spell-bound as the passionate words rose and fell, and then it came to the last verse and Jim's voice sank into hushed questioning.

"And yet—she has not spoke so long,
What if Heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,
And Heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?"

There was silence for a moment. May's eyes were full of tears.
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Suddenly Jim threw the book away, and, flinging himself on his knees before May, seized her hands.

"May, May, why should not we have a last ride together? No, no, do not answer yet; think—only one day together; one long day out of your beautiful life, one day to remember all mine."

"Ah! Jim, don't—don't be foolish and romantic," she replied, trying to speak lightly.

But he would not be put off so easily, passion had got the upper hand this time. He did not know how fiercely he was gripping May's hands in his.

"Think, darling—only one day; one day for you and me to spend together; one day for me in Paradise! Ah! my darling, I am going away—away from you. I may never see you again, and I love you—oh, how I love you! Be merciful! It is such a little thing I ask; one last day to spend together; just to think for that one day that you are mine. We would spend it—as the two we have just read about spent it—riding through the woods we know so well. It would be a perfect day! I would make you so happy! I could make you happy always, if only you would trust me. Ah! May, let me——?"

Then as she tried gently to free her hands from his he went on:

"No, no; I will not say anything about that, dearest, I promise you, if only you will grant me this one day out of your life. Think, May, how young you are; surely you can spare me one day out of all your glad life—one day before I go, it may be for ever?"

He paused, his face drawn and white with passionate anxiety fixed steadfastly on hers. She could see how he was trembling, as he waited for her to give her verdict. She had not realised until now how much this man loved her.

It was a moment or two before she spoke. The very earth seemed to have hushed her myriad children to silence in anxious expectation of the answer.

"If—if I agree to this ridiculous idea of yours, Jim, you must not think that—that it will make any difference afterwards."

May's voice was low and subdued, and she looked up imploringly at Jim.

"I swear to you that it shall not! Darling, you have been good to me, and I—I would die for you. Trust me, and I promise you no words of mine shall make a discord in the music of that day. It shall be the day before I sail; we will say good-bye at the end of it; and by the time you see me again, it will be only a faint dream-remembrance to you; while for me, I shall have a bit of heavenly joy given me to carry through all the long, long, dreary years before me. May, are you going to say yes?"

His voice had sunk to a whisper. The answer came slowly, falteringly.

"Yes, if—if you wish it so much."

For one moment Jim let his eyes rest on May's face; then seeing

her downcast eyes and trembling lips, he murmured a hasty "God bless you," and before she had time to realize it, was gone.

* * * * *

It was drawing towards the close of a June day—the day to which May had looked forward almost with dread, this last day with Jim. She had never heard of anyone being put in such a ridiculous position before, she said to herself, and wished Jim had not such romantic ideas, and that she had not so weakly given in to them. How could she pretend to be in love with him this day more than any other? It would be horrid. She did not in the least know what she was to do or say, and it was with a new feeling of shyness, to which she was unaccustomed and which made her almost speechless, that she had mounted her horse in the early morning of that glorious summer's day and ridden away with Jim.

But he was her lover and so was quick to note her nervousness, and with quiet tact he soon dispelled the overpowering shyness which at first hung like a thin but impenetrable veil between them, and threatened to mar the beauty of Jim's perfect day. In the early part of the morning they had ridden through the pine woods to a favourite spot, where a waterfall tumbled down the steep face of a high cliff, in winter a foaming torrent, but on this summer day, hanging like a silver thread, it fell with a faint musical tinkle on the brown rocks below. They had left their horses at a woodman's cottage, and under the shade of a fir tree, whose giant branches spread a cool scented canopy over their heads, they had rested and eaten their luncheon. It was Jim who unpacked the hamper of dainty food which May's mother had put together with a hopeful heart. She would have given much to have this strong man for May's husband. She had always hoped for it, and might it not be perhaps that at the end of the long day she would be granted her heart's desire? After lunch, it was Jim who washed the plates and packed the hamper again, which as May laughingly remarked was a reversal of the general order of picnics. Then they had rested in the shade through the hottest hours of the day while the sun beat down fiercely on the patches of yellowing grass. Jim had said he could make her happy, and through all the long hours of that day she did not realise how swiftly and happily the moments glided away. With a strength characteristic of the man, he had banished all thought of "to-morrow and to-morrow." To-day was his, he would have all the joy of it, time enough to remember in the long years to come.

But now it was nearly over, a soft golden haze was creeping over the woods making long mysterious shadows, and a gentle breeze was crooning the birds to sleep. In the open patches the sunlight still lingered, but in the long alleys where the trees met overhead, it was getting dark. Riding down one of these green paths came Jim and May, and the horses' hoofs fell noiselessly on the warm turf. They were not speaking; the stillness and peace of the evening seemed

to have fallen on both. Jim's "soul smoothed itself out, a long cramped scroll"; he was in dreamland; "dreams are real while they last, and do we not all live in dreams;" to him this day had been one long realisation of all his, and now it seemed as if he and May were riding through the dark shadow-land into the golden light and glory, it might be, of Heaven's gate.

And then across the silence there was wafted to them the sound of singing, a woman's voice. They were too far off to hear the words of the song, but the voice, a clear high soprano, was thrilling in its sweetness. It broke the spell of dreamy silence. May bent forward in her saddle, listening eagerly; music was to her one of the best things in life, and she knew that now she was listening to a true artist.

"Oh, Jim, let us ride up a little nearer!" And without waiting for a reply, she put her horse into a canter, riding towards the spot from where the music came.

A few seconds brought them to the edge of the wood, where a small house stood by itself. The long French windows opening on to the garden were wide open, and as May and Jim rode quietly up, the last words of a song died away. Then, after a moment, clear and sweet the wonderful voice rang out on the scented evening air.

"Oh! to be light of heart once more,
To ride through the woods again,
As once I rode ere sweetest joy
Had turned to saddest pain."

The song went on to the end: tender graceful words full of passionate regret for days and happiness that could come no more. The words were set to beautiful music, and the woman sang every word from her heart, but the end of the accompaniment stopped abruptly, and the singer's voice broke down in bitter sobbing.

May turned a startled face to Jim. The words of the song had been so curiously suited to the singer's unseen audience that they seemed to her full of meaning. She was excited. Stirred by the voice, the words raised in her mind for the first time a sudden doubt as to her feeling for Jim. Was it possible, after all, that she cared for him? Perhaps one day she herself might sing this song with bitter tears and regret as she had just heard it sung by the beautiful voice with its tone of haunting sadness. She looked questioningly at Jim's face as if to read her answer there, but it was in deep shadow; she could not see if the song had moved him as it had moved her. Then suddenly, with an impatient smile at her own folly, she turned her horse's head and rode quickly away until she was fairly galloping home, away from her own thoughts and the sound of hopeless sobs.

"Oh, Jim, I feel as if we had been mean in listening. Poor thing! What a sad world it seems; but what a lovely little

song—whose is it, I wonder? I shall never forget it as long as I live.”

May was still excited and absorbed by the song; she never noticed Jim's silence, never noticed that their “last ride together” was almost over. Her thoughts were with the broken-hearted singer, and she was softly humming over the refrain of the song to herself.

It was with a start that she drew rein and dismounted, and went into the little garden with Jim. She wished the good-byes were over; she was frightened; afraid that he would plead with her once more. She hated being cruel to him. Why, oh, why must everyone be unhappy in this world? Why could not she give him what he wanted? He had been so considerate, so tender to her all day—his love surely was not a thing to be lightly thrown aside. Should she—

“Darling, you have been good to me. God keep you, my sweet.”

He took May's face between his hands and gazed at it with absolute adoration, then seeing the tears gathering in the girl's eyes, he stooped, and kissing her gently, turned and went out into the night. And in the shadow of the drawing-room window, May's mother watched the parting, and sighed to herself as she saw Jim vanish out of their lives.

* * * * *

It was June again, two years had passed since Jim had said “Good-bye” to May. He had lectured successfully in America; from there had gone to Canada, and afterwards to Australia. He often wrote home to May long cheery letters, describing the places he saw and the friends he made, but to that last day they had spent together he never referred. May felt vaguely disappointed in his letters; they were clever, amusing, but there was something missing. She wondered if the two years had changed him much. However, he was on his way home now; he might turn up any day, and she would soon be able to see for herself if all the praise and admiration had spoiled him.

May's life had altered. She and her mother no longer lived in the country; money having been left them, they were able to satisfy their ambition of living in London. Music they both loved, and music at its best they could only get in the great metropolis. They made friends easily; May's beauty won her an easy way to most hearts. But to the many lovers who pleaded their cause with her, she gave the same answer she had given to Jim two years before. Over the last suitor she and her mother had almost quarrelled. The latter had tried to help on the luckless swain's suit.

“He has money, rank, goodness, all the virtues! You cannot go on all your life refusing. What do you object to in this man? You must not compare and expect every man to be like Jim.”

And May had been furious, and indignantly denied that she measured other men by her cousin.

"How can you say such things, mother? It is too ridiculous. I dislike all these men; they are all empty-headed and trivial. After all, we came to London for music; let us keep to that; it is worth far more than these stupid men."

So all through the spring they had steeped themselves in beautiful music. It was the only thing which had power to soothe the restlessness which at times overcame May, and which she fought and rebelled against blindly, not understanding it.

This afternoon she was feeling the restlessness unbearable. She walked up and down the sitting-room impatiently as she drew on her gloves.

"Mother, mother, are you ever coming? I am so afraid we shall be late, and I do not want to lose one note of this concert."

Her mother entered the room softly.

"Dear, I am so sorry, but I am afraid you must go alone. The heat has given me such a terrible headache, I could not stand the hot concert room. No, I do not want you to stop with me; I shall indeed be best alone, and it is nothing to worry about. Take both tickets; you might see someone to whom you could give mine."

"Oh, mother, don't you think you could manage it? It is the concert of the season, and you have been looking forward to it so much. It does seem a pity."

"Yes, I am horribly disappointed, but it would be no use my attempting it. I should probably faint; so do not wait any longer, love, but go and enjoy yourself."

In a few minutes May was driving alone in a hansom, looking out with dreamy eyes on the hot sunbaked streets with their crowds of all sorts and conditions of men. She was particularly restless herself this afternoon; and the busy hurrying hither and thither, the sudden jerks as the hansom was pulled up perpetually, the shouts of the drivers, seemed to chime in with her mood. It must be the heat, she thought, which was making her feel so wretched; London was detestable in hot weather; she would get her mother to leave at once; to-morrow if possible; she longed to get away into shady lanes; the peace and restful quietness of the country. The hansom pulled up with an extra jerk as the horse was dragged back on its haunches. May awoke from her musing to the fact that Royalty were honouring the concert with their presence. Her hansom was at the end of a long line. With a sigh she resigned herself to the thought of being a few minutes late. If it had not been so hot, she might have got out and walked the rest of the way to St. James's Hall, but she had not the energy. She leant over the boards of the hansom carelessly scanning the faces of the passers-by. Suddenly she started, and a half-cry escaped her lips.

"Jim!"

But he had seen her before she had seen him, and with quick steps he was already beside her hansom, and his hand closed over hers

with a firm clasp. The meeting was so unexpected, and Jim was utterly unprepared for it. His passionate love for May had risen up suddenly, like a mighty wave of the sea, and hurled him blinded and breathless at her feet. In the moment or two that were given him, as he made his way to her side, he made a desperate effort to regain his self-control, but it had left him pale, and his voice was hard, and the words were commonplace with which he greeted her.

"May, what luck! I was just going to look you up. I only arrived yesterday from Australia. You got my letter, I suppose? But you are going to the concert," as the hansom made another spasmodic jerk forward; "then I must not stay."

"Yes, but I have a spare ticket. Do come with me. Mother has a headache and could not come. I was going alone. You must come with me now; it is going to be a glorious concert."

The listlessness was gone from her eyes, and a soft colour had come into her cheeks, but she gave her invitation hesitatingly, surprised at the indifference of Jim's manner, and fearing a refusal.

He did not, however, need much persuasion, and in a few minutes they were in their seats under the balcony, and close to one of the side doors.

"I wish we had better places, but these were the only ones to be had," said May.

They were, after all, in time. The murmur of conversation had died away, and the first musician had already mounted the platform steps as they settled themselves down.

It was a particularly good programme, and London's best artists were performing. May knew most of the music. It was having the usual effect on her of banishing her restlessness, but this afternoon there was an undercurrent of excitement. Jim watched her, fascinated by the beauty of the girl.

"Ah, this is what I am most anxious of all to hear," she said, turning to Jim, and pointing to an item on the programme. "'Three little songs, by Maude Valérie White.' I have never heard them, but a friend told me they were lovely. She is going to accompany them herself. I love her music."

There was a round of deafening applause as a well-known baritone made his way up the steps and began his song.

The rich mellow voice rose softly at first, strengthening into a passion of regret and longing, and at last died away into a whisper of hope. The simplicity of the words and music, the beauty of the singer's voice, touched May almost to the point of pain. Something about the last few bars sounded familiar; where had she heard the refrain before? She felt as if struggling after some clue in the dark, struggling, too, it seemed for the clue to the restlessness that had been with her all these last months. And then without a pause, and unbroken by the vulgarity of ill-timed clapping, singer and player drifted into the next song.

"Oh! to be light of heart once more,
To ride through the woods again,
As once I rode ere sweetest joy
Had turned to saddest pain.

With parted lips and beating heart May listened to the first verse. And then there came before her eyes the vision of that "sun-bathed day in June." St. James's Hall and its crowd of fashionable people faded; she saw only a quiet wood with the evening sun flickering and dying softly in the west, there was wafted to her the scent of heather and pine, and a woman's voice singing this same song, and then a woman's sobs. The last verse was sung with exquisite tenderness and beauty; it seemed to May that the singer was singing to her alone out of all that vast crowd. He had a message for her—ah, what was it?

With a sudden comprehension May sank back, a half-stifled sob rose in her throat, as Music's soft fingers tenderly withdrew the veil that for so long had been before her eyes. In a moment of time it was all revealed to her. She had never felt the weariness and restlessness, the vague discontent when he had been with her in those old days in the country, when they sat under the lime tree and read Browning together. And that day in the wood—she knew it now to have been the happiest in her life; her "sweetest joy" had indeed "turned to saddest pain." Why, oh, why had she not realised it then, when she had only to stretch out her hand for happiness? And now—now it was the old story—too late! She was struggling bravely to maintain her composure, but the room was swimming before her eyes; she felt choking; the revelation had come so swiftly, so unexpectedly. She was afraid to look up, afraid almost to breathe—and then she heard her name softly whispered.

"May!"

Only the one word, but there was a world of tenderness and entreaty, the devotion of a lifetime in the utterance of that one word. Slowly, very shyly, May raised her eyes to meet those of her lover, and then these two, without words and in the midst of that vast crowd, silently plighted their troth. A great quietness and content seemed to steal over May's soul as the unbearable pain of a moment before vanished; the melody sounded soothingly indistinct and far away, the room was full of "the sweet power of music," and of the peace and glory of that June evening two years ago.

In the burst of applause which followed the conclusion of the songs, May followed Jim out of the concert-room. The passages of St. James's Hall have nothing romantic about them; to the casual concert-goer they are cold, and but so much ground to be hurried through as quickly as possible. But to Jim and May it was enchanted ground; the great magician, Love, had waved his wand, and bade them enter his fairyland; soft rosy clouds covered the bare walls, and before them stretched a long pathway of golden light.

"Darling, is it true—oh, is it true that you love me at last?"

Jim laid his hand entreatingly on May's arm.


She raised her eyes, and the look in them melted the last doubt in the man's mind.

"Yes, Jim, I love you," she said softly, simply; "but I was stupid and did not know it until this afternoon. I believe I have loved you ever since our last ride together. I think I almost guessed it that evening in the wood when we were riding home and we heard the woman singing that song. I knew it when I heard the song again just now. It seemed to tell me suddenly how foolish and blind I had been not to know before. But you—are you quite sure that you care for me still?"

She looked up, not doubting his answer; but she was a woman, and she wanted him to tell her with his lips what his eyes had told her in the concert room.

"Love you?"—and his voice vibrated with the passion so long restrained. "If I spent my whole life telling you, I could never express one-half of it. I have loved you since you were a child; loved you when you were a girl and we read Browning together; loved you still more on the day of our 'last ride together,' when the bitterness of parting and the blackness of despair made me feel numb and dead. Loved you these two long weary years, while my life has been one constant aching for a sight of your face and a touch of your hand. And you—you ask me if I love you—still!"

His voice had sunk; it was low and unsteady with the repressed love of many years; and as he stooped and kissed May on her lips, she knew she had that love now and for all eternity.



ANIMATED FLOWERS.

"Here, too, were living flowers,
Which, like a bud, compacted
Their purple cups contracted;
And now in open blossom spread,
Stretch'd, like green anthers, many a seeking head."

—*Southey.*

THE flowers of the sea far surpass those of the land in splendid and gorgeous colouring. In the "gardens of Nereus" there are anemones of the richest crimson, purple and orange; chrysanthemums, beautifully striped and variegated; carnations, whose petals are exquisitely cut and fringed; and dahlias, so perfect in form that they could not fail to win the admiration of enthusiastic flower-fanciers.

But these flowers are not only beautiful. Nature has endowed them with wonderful powers. They fold and expand their petals at will; some of them can move from place to place; and others are so peculiarly sensitive that the slightest touch will cause them to shrink into shapeless lumps of jelly.

What are these extraordinary beings? Are they plants or animals, or do they stand upon some debatable ground between the two great kingdoms of organic nature? In ancient times they were doubtless regarded as sea-nymphs metamorphosed into flowers; but the present age of science expounds the riddle, informing us that these magic flowers are true animals.

The sea-anemones are by far the most conspicuous of the wild-flowers of the deep, and we will therefore give them the precedence in our examination. If we wander about the sea-beach at low tide, we may find plenty of these creatures attached to the rocks and stones left bare by the receding waves. The commonest are those known as the Smooth anemones, which seem, when out of the water, to be mere knobs of jelly. On touching them you find that they are tough and leathery, though you would never have imagined so from their appearance. These little knobs are variously coloured, but different shades of green and red are their prevailing hues.

When the sea comes up and covers the anemones, they assume the most lovely shapes. Each lump of jelly expands into a beautiful flower, having somewhat the form of a chrysanthemum, but a far more brilliant colour. When fully expanded, each flower displays a ring of turquoise beads, whose pure blue forms a beautiful contrast to the crimson, purple, and orange tints of the petals.

These jewelled flowers are not to be compared with their aristocratic

relations, the Thick-horned anemones. Words can convey no idea of the beauty of these creatures. They are much larger than the last species, and some of them, when expanded, are four or five inches across. Their petals, which are very thick in proportion to their length, are delicately transparent, and prettily striped and ringed with various brilliant colours. These animated flowers have been well likened to quilled dahlias; but to complete the simile, we must suppose that the terrestrial flowers have petals of gelatine.

The Daisy anemone is another beautiful species. They may be found in abundance upon some coasts, in the tide-pools and hollows. In the sunshine of a fair day they expand beautifully, and you may see them studding the face of the rock just beneath the surface of the water, from the size of a shilling to that of a crown piece. If you touch one of these sensitive daisies, its circular disc will at once begin to curl and pucker at its margin, and soon take the form of a cup; if further annoyed, the rim of this cup will contract more and more, until it closes. The diameter of the disc is nearly four times that of the body at the point from which it expands. The petals are very small, but numerous, and are arranged on the disc in about six rows. As for colouring, the daisy is not surpassed by any flower of the deep; for though its tints are less brilliant than those of the living chrysanthemums and dahlias, they are so beautifully blended into one another, that they cause the little creature to appear quite as lovely as its flaring cousins. The upper surface of the disc is of a rich amber brown, merging into lavender colour towards the edge; the petals brown, blotched and speckled with white; and the base white, passing into pink, then lilac, and becoming purple as it joins the disc.

But of all the flowers that bloom in the sea, perhaps the Plumose anemone is the most magnificent. It is much taller than any of the creatures we have described, and excels them in delicacy of colouring; pure white, pearly grey, or faint rose, taking the place of scarlet, olive, or brown. It is indeed a creature of surpassing loveliness, and has justly been styled the maiden queen of all the beautiful tribe.

The sea-anemones are terribly voracious, devouring everything that comes within their reach. We are not romancing, dear reader: these flowers of the sea have wonderful appetites, and are endowed with digestive powers that the human gourmand might well covet. If we examine the internal structure of these anomalous beings, we shall be able to account for their voracity.

A sea-anemone may be likened to a double bag; the outer bag forming the exterior of the animal, and the inner one its stomach; the intervening space being divided into numerous chambers by vertical partitions, which pass in a radiating direction between the outer surface of the stomach and the general integument. The arms or tentacles of the anemone, which we have hitherto spoken of as petals, are hollow, and communicate with the internal chambers.

These chambers are always filled with water, and by the contraction of the walls, water is forced into the hollow tentacles. The tentacles are also provided with small orifices at the extremity, that can be opened or closed by the animal. Water is taken in by these orifices, so as to distend the radiating chambers and tentacles, and is ejected with considerable violence through the same apertures whenever the creature is alarmed. The tentacles are placed in rows round the mouth, which is usually circular or oval.

Although the anemone is a mere membranous bag distended with sea-water, it is endowed with powers that render it more than a match for many animals occupying a much higher position in the scale of being. No sooner does a small fish, a crab, or a shelled mollusc come within reach of its tentacles, than it is seized by them, and drawn to the gaping mouth of the greedy flower, the tentacles closing upon it on all sides. After awhile the tentacles again expand, and an empty crust or shell is ejected through the mouth, the nourishing contents having been mysteriously extracted in the stomach of the anemone.

And now, abstemious reader, can you wonder at the voracity of these strange creatures? If you had a stomach of proportional capacity, a mouth equally extensive, and a hundred arms constantly picking up dainties, depend upon it you would be quite as greedy.

The anemone attaches itself to the rock by means of a sucking base, but it seldom remains long in the same place. In travelling it pushes forward one portion of the base, and having fixed it firmly, draws the remaining portion after it—a mode of progression very similar to that adopted by the snail. There are many more wonderful things connected with the sea-anemones which we cannot stop to consider, as we must now pass on to another kind of living flower.

The Madreporæ is allied to the anemones, but differs from them in many important points. This beautiful little flower of the sea has a stony skeleton, consisting of a number of thin chalky plates, standing up edgewise, and arranged in a radiating manner round a low centre. We have informed the reader that the interior of an anemone is divided into numerous chambers by perpendicular veils of membrane. If he will now imagine that every one of these membranes is turned into stone, he will understand the formation of the madreporæ's skeleton, and its relation to the soft investing flesh.

Mr. Gosse, the naturalist, has given a charming description of the living madreporæ in one of his pleasant books. "Let it," he says, "after being torn from the rock, recover its equanimity; then you will see a pellucid gelatinous flesh emerging from between the plates, and little exquisitely formed and coloured tentacles, with white clubbed tips fringing the sides of the cup-shaped cavity in the centre, across which stretches the oval disc, marked with a star of some rich and

brilliant colour, surrounding the central mouth, a slit with white crenated lips, like the orifice of one of those elegant cowry-shells which we put upon our mantel-pieces. The mouth is always more or less prominent, and can be protruded and expanded to an astonishing extent. The space surrounding the lips is commonly fawn-colour or rich chestnut brown; the star, or vandyked circle, rich red, pale vermillion, and sometimes the most brilliant emerald green, as brilliant as the gorget of a humming-bird."

The madrepores are quite as greedy as their wandering friends the anemones, and the presence of food stimulates them to more active efforts and the display of greater intelligence than we should give them credit for. Mr. Gosse relates a very amusing anecdote about feeding a madrepora. He once put a minute spider, as large as a pin's head, into the water, pushing it down with a bit of grass to a coral, which was lying with partially exposed tentacles. The instant the insect touched the tip of the tentacle it adhered, and was drawn in with the surrounding tentacles between the plates, near their inward margin. Watching the animal with a lens, he saw the small mouth slowly open, and move over to that side, the lips gaping unsymmetrically: while at the same time, by a movement as imperceptible as that of the hour-hand of a watch, the tiny prey was carried along between the plates towards the corner of the mouth. The latter, however, moved most, and at length reached the edges of the plates, and gradually took in and closed upon the insect; after which it slowly returned to its usual place in the centre of the disc. After some quarter of an hour, Mr. Gosse caught a house-fly, and taking hold of its wings with a pair of pliers, plunged it under water. The tentacles held it at the first contact as before, and drew it down upon the mouth, which instantly began to gape in expectation. But the struggles of the fly's legs perhaps tickled the coral's tentacles in an unwonted manner, for they shrank away, and presently released the intended victim, which rose to the surface like a cork; only, however, to become the breakfast of an expectant daisy, which was much too wise to reject or let slip so dainty a prey. The poor coral evidently regretted the untoward necessity of letting it go, for his mouth kept gaping for some time after the escape.

The animated flowers of the tropical seas far surpass those that bloom on our own shores. In the Red Sea, for instance, branching corals, madrepores, anemones of the most brilliant hues, flourish in such luxuriance as to form a submarine garden of unparalleled magnificence. "Where is the paradise of flowers," exclaims a German naturalist, "that can rival in variety and beauty these living wonders of the ocean?"


And these gardens of Nereus, through the introduction of the aquarium, may be brought into our homes. The brilliant and sparkling hues of the marine creatures will prove equally attractive in the tiny vase and in the boundless ocean, the more so as we may be

fettered to bricks and mortar, shut in our town prison, or hemmed round by stern duties which we cannot elude ; so the deep sea may roar a bluff greeting, but we hear it not !

Let us consider how one of these mimic oceans may be formed. We procure a tank of plate glass, and cover its slate bottom with a layer of sand from the sea-beach, or even well-washed river sand. But perhaps the best of all materials for forming a bottom are broken granite and coarse shingle. Rock-work must now be introduced, so as to provide shady nooks for those delicate creatures that shun the light or are of a retiring disposition. We may fashion the rock-work into a rude arch, or three large pieces of stone may be built up in the form of a table or druidical *cromlech*.

The aquarium having been filled with sea-water is now ready for stocking with marine plants and animals. The plants render the water fit for the maintenance of animal life, while the animals check the too rapid increase of vegetation. Thus the success of our aquarium will depend upon the proper balance of animal and vegetable life. We select the green and red reeds, as the brown and olive are apt to discolour the water. Sea-plants have no roots, but adhere by minute discs to the surface of the rock ; a piece of stone has accordingly to be knocked off with each plant, in order that it may be removed to our glass tank.

Some days should be allowed to elapse before the animals are introduced, so that the plants may have time to impregnate the water with their minute spores. Among the finny inhabitants of the mermaid's home, the little mullets rank first, then the blennies and gobies ; but many other kinds of fish may find a place in our mimic ocean. The common periwinkle is essential to the aquarium, as it fulfils the duties of a scavenger and carefully removes the green film that sometimes forms upon the glass. The star-fishes, crabs, serpulæ, and the prawns are favourites with aquarian naturalists ; but the lovely sea-anemones are the crowning glories of the glass tank. We must carefully remove all dead plants and animals from our aquarium. It is indispensable that there should be a free access of light ; but we must not expose our tank to the full glare of the sun's rays, or the water will become heated, and its delicate inhabitants will surely die. These tanks require constant attention, but their beauty will more than repay us for any amount of trouble. They have been beautifully described as "flowery-gardens, which never wither ; fairy lakes of perpetual calm, which no storm blackens."



DOCTOR GREENFIELD.

BY LADY MABEL HOWARD.

DR. GREENFIELD looked round his small study with satisfaction and a touch of pride. In spite of the book-cases filled with treatises on medicines and diseases, and the inevitable patient's chair, the room still managed to be an attractive one. The book-cases were of oak; the dreaded chair lay claim to be a particularly good specimen of an early Sheraton; and over the chimney-piece, and on all available space of the soft green-coloured walls hung good mezzotint prints in dark frames.

The servant put a match to the log-laid fire, for although it was May, there was an evening chill, and sensation of damp.

The Doctor had dined early, with the expectation of a long drive, so his evening at home was unintentional, and caused by the little piece of pink paper which now lay unheeded at his feet. He stretched himself, felt how tired he was, and how luxurious was this unexpected evening at home. Then he remembered the cause, and with an involuntary movement, stooped and picked up the paper from where it lay. He opened it and read it again, though he had done so several times already.

A telegram so short, but he knew what it had meant to the sender of it; a lifelong message of despair, of shipwrecked hopes and utter loneliness. "Charlie died this evening." Dr. Greenfield read it out loud quite slowly—and once more it fluttered to the ground, and he sighed. So it was all over; the eight weeks' watching; the alternate hope and despair; the grim fight with death—and death had triumphed. He saw the girl, the sender of the message, standing as she had done when he had told her that her brother must die. He thought of the weeks during which time he had been so much thrown with this girl—Juliet Carson—the days which they had spent together watching by the sick man's bed, fighting the battle of skill and science with destiny.

And all the time his mind dwelt on it, he knew it did not really touch him—the worst part to him was that his science had failed him. For a moment he let himself believe that the constant facing death, which as a doctor he was bound to confront, had hardened his feelings, made him callous, and taken his sense of pity and sympathy from him; but he was too honest, and he remembered with a true flash of conviction that it had always been so, and memory took him back over many years, and he seemed to hear his nurse saying, "Master George has no heart, he didn't feel

his father's death a bit." And it came to him how right she had been, how he had wanted to care, but something wouldn't let him; he could not cry as his brother did, and he had felt as if he belonged somewhere else. All his later life, too, he had known it. He had no sympathy, no pity, and he knew that others felt the want in him, though often they did not know what it was. He had lived for thirty-five years now, and he had never cared for anyone; and for the first time to-night, as he sat and looked into the fire, he knew that his life had been only half complete, that he lacked what was the best, and that his whole existence had been colourless. Still, as he argued against himself, if he had lacked the best, he had also missed the worst: many of his friends had gone; he had wanted to care, but the power was not there; he had seen piteous sights; he had witnessed heartrending scenes of poverty and despair, but they had all been nothing to him; they had passed by, and he had forgotten.

Somehow the image of Juliet to-night came back to him; the girl in her sorrow and loneliness with no one left to her; and he wondered why his heart was not wrung with pity. Although she did not stir his heart, or his senses, he could see she was beautiful; but for some other man, not for him. A new and painful sensation of loneliness suddenly swept over him, a horrible whiff of middle age, a foretaste of the solitude of old age, which must overtake him, but he could do nothing to help himself, he had no will, no power. He sat on in his deep reverie, with his eyes fixed on the burning logs. Then he got up from his chair and went to the window and looked out on the May evening.

It was half-past eight o'clock, and the chill which comes just after sunset was in the air. He stood looking into the clear blue distance, listening to the nightingales and the hum of the bees. Then suddenly he saw a sight which astonished him—a procession winding its way down the long avenue of limes which faced his window: a curious procession, too—a funeral—it was unlike any he had seen before. It gave him a strange sensation. Preceding it were men and women, chanting as they went.

They paused as they came near to him, the singing ceased, and several made a gesture as if they would ask him to join them; then they drew back as he heard one say, "Ah, not him; he knows no pity, he has no love, he cannot come;" and they passed on, taking up their chant; and for the first time in his life he knew he was an outcast and a pariah. He was hungering and thirsting for someone to help him and pity him.

Behind them came men carrying the body of the dead man, and he bowed as they went by. Once more he looked, and he saw three figures—three white-robed women, walking together. And the one who walked in the midst had the eyes of Juliet Carson, and in her hands she held a large cup. The three paused as they came near to

him, and it seemed to him as if a veil fell between the rest of the procession and them, the music got fainter, and he was left alone with these three; something within him told him that they held in that cup the power of pity and love, that they alone could give them to him, and he cried to them to take pity on him. Then Juliet, for it was Juliet, spoke to him; her eyes were troubled, though her face shone with a radiant smile, and her voice came to him as a soft wind, and stilled his despair and restlessness.

"Listen," she said, "and know what you ask. We are three sisters, Love, Joy, and Sorrow, and if you drink of this cup you can never again be as you were. You would wish, likely, to take only Love and Joy, but as love brings joy, so also it surely brings sorrow, and you cannot take one without the other. Say, will you take Love, and in so doing accept Joy and Sorrow as they come?" and she paused while he made his choice.

But with eager trembling hands he took the cup she offered him, and drank thirstily, and then—his whole being was flooded with hope and delight, and as he handed the cup back to Juliet in her radiant form of love, she bent forward a little and kissed him—a kiss which thrilled his soul, and sent the life-blood rushing through his veins. Then the figures vanished. Once more he heard the faint sound of distant music, and then—and then. . . .

The Doctor straightened himself in his chair, and looked round him in a dazed, bewildered manner.

"A dream," he murmured. "Is it possible? I, too, of all men."

He looked round him. The May morning was breaking into his room, the birds were singing, the sun was up. So then he had fallen asleep in his chair, and all that seemed so real, so tangible, was nothing but a dream—a dream of possibilities, and an awakening to realities.

As his mind grew clearer, he remembered all that had taken place the night before—ah! that telegram was the reality; and once more he stooped to pick it up. But, as he read it, a new feeling, and yet not a new feeling came to him—the sensation of his dream. It made him giddy, and he went to the window to steady himself, and to feel the air. But in him, and all around him, he was conscious of a change; a rush of almost divine pity and love swept across him. Ah! that, then, was no dream; he was in touch with the love, the sorrow, and pity of the world; he shared them all; he was one of them, he was no longer the pariah, the outcast; and more than that, he too loved, and his love had been alone with her suffering and sorrow all night. Last night he had not cared; to-day the pity of it almost stifled him.

He threw up the window and stepped on to the lawn; the fresh dew was upon everything, and he stretched himself in the rays of the sun, and thanked God he was alive. He looked long up the avenue, where in his dream he had seen the procession come down, and he

shuddered when he thought how they had left him—no, not all—and his heart beat as he thought of Juliet Carson, and how she had come to him at the time of his great want. And the thought of her brought back to him the reality and the present, and, as he listened to the clock striking six, he knew that his restlessness must wait; he who had waited all his life was now impatient for two hours to be over. Ah! had it come to this. He smiled at his own impetuosity, but had not the heart to rebuke himself.

He spent the next two hours wandering up and down his garden, listening to the morning sounds, as the world woke bit by bit to its day's work. He watched the workmen pass by his gate on their way to take up their daily toil, and he wondered why he had never pitied them—his had been so much more a case of pity. Though worn and tired, and perhaps saddened, they, too, had loved; they had somewhere, sometime, romance in their lives.

As the church clock struck eight he made his way to the stables and ordered his dog-cart. His own voice had a conscious sound in it, and he felt all the world must know he was a changed man. As he drove through the deep lanes, with the honeysuckle, pink may, and wild cherry blossom all in their beauty before him, he felt that there was only life, only beauty in the world, and all the sorrowful and sad side of it had fled away. But as he neared the old manor house, where death triumphed, his beating heart quietened somewhat, and he felt a touch of sorrow come over him.

He was evidently expected, for he was admitted at once into the long low room, into which the sun was pouring. The window was thrown up, and as he paused he felt that the stillness of death was in the house. Then he heard a slight movement and turned. At the open window stood Juliet, the sun's rays lighting up her white gown, and her brown hair; her eyes had the troubled expression of his dream, but there was no radiance in the sad, weary, little face. In her hands she held great branches of white lilacs, lilies, and roses.

He went to meet her with outstretched hand, and a great pity in his heart spiritualizing his human love.

"I knew," she said simply, "I knew you would come." Had she, too, seen the vision, or was it in his face?

And did she bend her head as in his dream?—for his lips found hers, and that kiss drew the bitterness from her sorrow, while it opened up his new life for him, sweeping away all the years he had left behind, and flooding his soul with light and love.

And although they were in the presence of death, did not love triumph?

ELIZABETH OF HEIDELBERG.

A SCENE ON THE CASTLE TERRACE.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF SPAIN," "MEMORIALS OF MRS. HENRY WOOD," ETC., ETC.

IT was the 15th of May, 1619, and the times were out of joint.

On the famous Terrace of Heidelberg Castle, which had not long been constructed, two figures paced to and fro in the lowering twilight. Their walk was slow and dignified, and they were in deep and earnest conversation. On the result of that conversation their own fate for weal or woe depended. They were quite alone, for they had dismissed their attendants, who, nothing loth, had hastened to the repast—the plain, cold supper of somewhat coarse and heavy food, stimulated by draughts of wine and beer freely repeated: for in the year of Grace 1619, a successful meal was judged rather by quantity than quality—awaiting them in the refectory set apart for the suite who composed the court of the Elector and his consort.

But whilst the suite had apartments in the Otto-Heinrich-building, the newer Frederick's-building, planned very much in the English style by Frederick for his beloved princess, was entirely devoted to themselves, their children, and their most favoured guests. Here they lived a happy domestic life, in which not one jarring note of discord was ever heard.

The two who now paced the Terrace, indifferent to time and their own repast, were Frederick V. and Elizabeth.

He was fairly tall, strong, and well made—his form is said to have been the perfection of modelling—and he would undoubtedly have been handsome but for the squareness of the lower jaw. His was a face that should have grown a beard, yet was clean shaven in all but the very short and pointed beard of the period which in no way disguised the outline of the face. As it was, he had an exceedingly open and agreeable countenance, to which the artists of the age have by no means done justice. His hair was curly, his forehead square and broad; the eyes, large, brown and fine, glowed with love and adoration as they gazed upon the fair features, the frank and gracious expression of the "Queen of Hearts," as Elizabeth even then was called.

Yet it is singular that the face of Frederick, with all its good points, in spite of the square jaw which should have denoted firmness of purpose and promptitude of action, was somewhat marred by an expression of weakness and indecision which boded no good to him and his, should the future place them in any position needing the exercise of those qualities.

Elizabeth, who paced the Terrace with him, her arm within his, looked every inch a queen, though but the wife of the Elector Palatine. But she had been brought up under the shadow of a throne, in the atmosphere of a court : first of Scotland, then England : and was therefore born to all the dignity and grace she so eminently possessed.

Her features were beautiful and refined ; her eyes, like her husband's, were dark, and distinguished by a peculiar softness which the painters of the time—Mireveldt and Honthorst—have handed down to posterity. Her complexion was that of the blush-rose, which shaded itself off into the extreme whiteness and purity of her skin—index to the pure and beautiful mind which was in such direct contrast to most of the Stuarts.

Just now, as she noted the adoring gaze of her husband, the roses deepened and the eyes drooped shyly. She might have been a maiden in the first days of her courtship ; yet they had been married six years and were still lovers. Three children had been born to them, and a fourth—Prince Rupert—would come to further gladden their hearts ere many months were over.

Fair and beautiful was her face, and there was as yet no evidence—not even the faintest foreshadowing—of a coming day when sadness would permanently cloud the soft lustre of those eyes, the cheeks would lose their roundness, and the roses would fade. This, too, Mireveldt by the magic of his art has handed down to posterity. That sad change all lay in the future, and as they paced the Terrace together that warm May evening, that future promised to be bright and unclouded.

Yet that very evening, though they knew it not, a decision was to be taken which would presently cause the clouds to overcast their sky and for ever extinguish all its sunshine.

"The offer has been made me, and if I accept, it will be chiefly for your sake, beloved," Frederick was saying, as he placed his hand upon the small white hand of his wife that reposed so gracefully within his arm. "Queen of my heart, it is my ambition that you should in truth be queen of a nation. Who would wear a crown so gracefully—who so fitted to adorn a throne?"

Elizabeth sighed, for underlying the pleasure caused by her husband's words was a strange feeling of pain. Was it prompted by her guardian angel, bidding her curb his ambition if she would retain the happiness of their life? Her next words would seem to suggest it.

"Frederick, my own, I was born and have lived under the very shadow of a throne; England and Scotland have both called me Princess——"

"More than that," interrupted Frederick. "Eldest daughter of Scotland, they of the north called you. They were proud of you, child though you were; loved you, my Elizabeth, from the day that your namesake, the great Elizabeth intimated her pleasure that her

own name should be given to you at your baptism at Holyrood. Oh, the Scots, with all their mists and northern clime and rugged natures, are warmer-hearted than the English! Is it not fitting that you, too, should become, if possible, a great queen—though it cannot be queen of England? I should indeed like you to go down to posterity as Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia.”

“Listen, my Frederick, and do not interrupt me,” pleaded the soft voice of Elizabeth; a voice so different from the harsh and grating



THE WELL-HOUSE; HEIDELBERG CASTLE.

tones to which Frederick had been accustomed. He possessed an ear strongly susceptible to melody, and one of the great charms of the Princess that had helped to win and keep his heart, was her soft and musical enunciation. “Listen, my Frederick. Until you took me away from England, and brought me to this paradise: this haven of rest, where all the passions of the world and all its strife vainly try to enter: I lived under the shadow of a throne, and learned that it is an atmosphere in which the cares and anxieties, the jealousies and

intrigues, the struggles for power, and the acquisition of now one portion of the world and now another, far, far outweigh all the advantages and all the prestige conferred by the mere wearing of a crown. Believe me, beloved, that I have no wish to occupy a throne. I would rather be the wife of the Elector Frederick than wake up to find myself Queen of Bohemia. Think of our calm and peaceful life here. I never thought such happiness could exist on earth. It has passed as a dream. I have been in paradise—I am in paradise. Yea, and a dream sometimes comes to me—I have dreamed it often—that the world has grown cold and cheerless, and I see myself sitting alone outside the gates of bliss; and you are not beside me, and I call to you and you do not come. Many a time, my Frederick, though I have never told you—unhappy dreams should not be uttered aloud—many a time I have awakened, cold and shivering, the tears rolling down my cheeks, and your beloved name upon my lips. Why should that dream come to me so frequently if it be not to warn me that any change in our life may be fatal to our peace of mind? Frederick, be content; you were not born to a throne; take not its certain cares but very doubtful privileges upon you.”

The soft voice pleaded, the small hand gently pressed the arm that supported it, the beautiful eyes looked yearningly into the husband's face, wondering if any impression had been made.

Undoubtedly at this time it was by no means Elizabeth's ambition to ascend a throne. Her life at Heidelberg had entwined itself about her heart; the princely residence had become very dear to her; she tenderly loved her husband; he was all in all to her, and all-sufficient. Here her eldest children had been born; she was a devoted mother, and could give them far more time and thought than would ever be possible if she became Queen of Bohemia.

“My heart's treasure,” returned Frederick, who heard but for once did not heed his wife's persuasion—she whose word usually was law with him—“our quiet life here has robbed you, for the time, of your ambition: but once Queen of Bohemia you will enjoy wearing the crown you will adorn. Remember, beloved, that Bohemia is not England; the sceptre will not bring with it the cares and intrigues of a greater kingdom.”

“Only a question of degree, Frederick,” returned Elizabeth. “No crown can be worn without its responsibilities and its dangers. In these unsettled times every crowned head practically stands on a volcano, which may burst forth any moment and shiver him to atoms. He lives, as it were, from day to day, not knowing what the next may bring forth. Trust me, Frederick, we are happier as we are, with leisure to enjoy each other's companionship, and time to devote to our children.”

But Frederick, unconvinced, shook his head.

“There is another view of the question, my Elizabeth,” he said. “Think of the oppressed Bohemians. Think of that tyrant

Ferdinand, a religious fanatic, narrow and austere, who would have the papal rule supreme throughout the world, and put to the sword every man who will not turn to Rome. Could he do as he pleased, we should see over again the Massacre of St. Bartholomew with its horrors a hundredfold magnified: and if the religious tyrant remains unopposed, who knows how soon all Europe may be stained with the blood of his victims?"

"Not yours the task to oppose him, my Frederick," returned Elizabeth, still more earnestly than she had yet spoken: for with all her love for her husband, her keen insight had penetrated the real weakness and vacillation of his character: she knew him to be a man made for domestic life, never made to be a ruler and leader of men—and especially such men as the Bohemians.

But they were sick unto death of Ferdinand and his cruel tyrannies; the lands of Frederick adjoined their country; it suited them to offer him the crown. Frederick was popular and amiable; with him they would have peace, which meant prosperity. Under more favourable conditions their choice would have been a wise one; but the times were out of joint, and so they chose Frederick, and their choice was fatal to all concerned.

They had hoped that, as the son-in-law of James, he would have had the support of England, never dreaming that James would sacrifice both his daughter and her husband's best interests to his vanity and his ambition.

A weak man was James, mean and contemptible, without natural affection; loving only one person in the world—himself; in some ways the very worst of the Stuarts. Strange he should have had a daughter so intellectual and virtuous as Elizabeth. And had Henry, Elizabeth's favourite brother, only lived, it is more than probable that there would have been no Commonwealth and no Cromwell to deprive Elizabeth of her only remaining brother and cause her to exclaim not once but many times of the Puritan Dictator: "There never was so great a hypocrite!"

Elizabeth had a large heart and wide affections: her husband did not absorb all that her heart could give. She had loved Henry, and when he was taken, she became devoted to Charles. Charles, on his side, ever loved her tenderly and never refused her a favour he could possibly grant. His martyrdom was one of the very awful troubles of her life, and she had some of his hair mounted in a ring which she constantly wore. It was once lost at the Hague for two months; every search was made, every inquiry; nothing could be heard of it. Then mysteriously as it disappeared, so was it restored. She one day found it on her dressing-table, and never knew, and never could even guess, by what hand it was brought back to her.

Elizabeth had great insight into character. She knew her husband's weaknesses, but not all of them. That he was undecided and vacillating was evident; that she had the greater mind and more

steadfast purpose, so that as a rule she could turn him which way she would, she also knew; but she did not know that want of courage was amongst his failings; that on the field of battle he would be seized with panic, and turn and fly from his enemies, leaving his army in the lurch. Yet this was what he did at the Battle of Prague, when the Emperor's troops confronted him under the command of Tilly. Before a single blow had been given, he turned and took refuge in Holland—and his short reign was over, and the Bohemians awoke to their mistake.

"The gods give up to folly those whom they wish to chastise:" and though we do not know of any particular reason why Frederick merited correction, still the gods undoubtedly gave him up to folly when he was persuaded into accepting the Bohemian crown. And it is these weak men who can occasionally be obstinate in a wrong cause, so that nothing that can be said or done will turn them.

Elizabeth was realizing this on the particular evening in which we see them pacing the Castle Terrace.

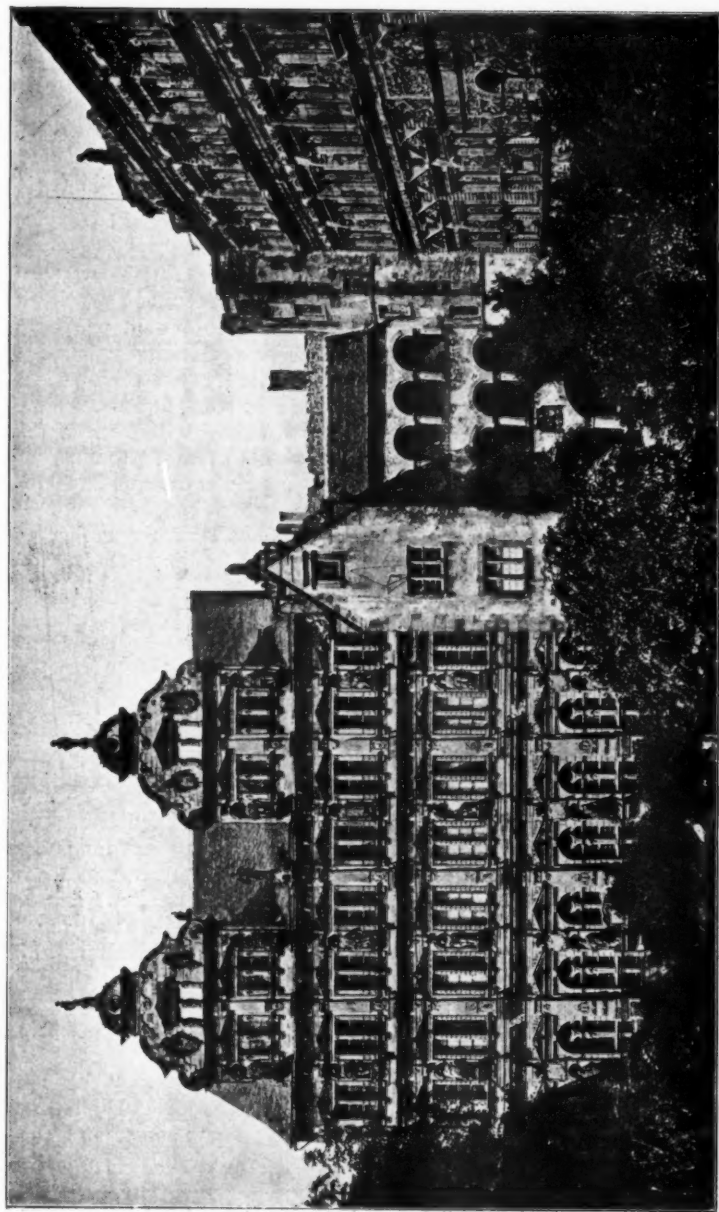
"Not yours to oppose him, my Frederick," said Elizabeth, with all the earnestness she could command. "Leave Bohemia to the care of Heaven, and let Ferdinand's evil deeds find him out. Be sure they will do so ere long. The good and the true must triumph in the end and wrong be righted."

"Wrong, beloved, is righted through man's agency," persisted Frederick. "Heaven works by simple means, not by miracles. If the Bohemians offer me their crown, I have not gone out of my way to seek it. I may surely take this as a sign of Heaven's will and favour. By refusing it, I may neglect my duty, and the task it is Heaven's will I should perform, thereby drawing down the just anger of Heaven upon my head."

Elizabeth shook her own pretty head, and in her soft brown eyes there lurked the utmost gravity.

"We have an old saying in England," she remarked. 'Let well alone.' Whether it is to be found in the ponderous works of William Shakespeare, who was so great a favourite with my godmother Elizabeth—and who I admit possesses a most rare and profound knowledge of human nature, but who is too broad in his allusions for my taste—I know not, but it is good advice. You were not born for the arts and perils of war, my Frederick, and whoever now accepts the crown of Bohemia, must head his army and take command of the battlefield, and face the superior forces of Ferdinand and the consummate tactics of the dreaded Tilly."

"Even that I should be equal to," said Frederick, raising his fine form to its full height, and looking for the moment every inch a king and conqueror, so that Elizabeth's heart, even in the midst of her pleading and anxiety, beat with pride. "I could go to the battlefield with a clear conscience, certain that Heaven would defend my cause."



HEIDELBERG CASTLE. FREDERICK'S-BUILDING (PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT FOR ELIZABETH) TO THE LEFT.

Yet we know what actually happened; and how at Prague poor Frederick exposed himself to the ridicule and contempt of the world, and was derisively called the "Winter-King."

"Even that," he reiterated, "I should be equal to. Remember, beloved, that when three years ago, I took upon myself the Government of the Palatinate, I became the head of the Protestant Union of German princes, and am bound to act in accordance with my responsibility in that great matter. These princes amongst others are urging me to accept the crown, and if I refuse them I seem to fail in my duty and betray the trust committed to me."

"Not so, my Frederick," returned Elizabeth. "Your trust concerns only the Palatinate. If Ferdinand came here and interfered with your government, and tried to turn your Protestant people to the error of his ways, then I should say with a thousand voices if I owned them: *TO ARMS!* I would even myself take a command in the field and fight by your side if it were necessary, and neither the sword of the enemy nor the sight of blood, neither the groans of the wounded nor the awfulness of the dead, should cause me to flinch or fail." And Elizabeth spoke but the truth: she was the true daughter of a king, weak and contemptible though that king was. "But, Frederick, my own, you are not called upon to right the wrongs of Bohemia. Beware, love, lest in forsaking the Palatinate for an uncertain crown, you lose both countries."

Prophetic words, if Frederick had but known and seen.

"You forget, my Elizabeth, that I have both power and influence at my command; and this, I am persuaded, is one reason why the Bohemians would have me for their king. More than Elector Palatine, I am son-in-law to the King of England, the foremost country of Europe, thanks to your godmother and namesake, Elizabeth. Your father would do his very utmost for me, and backed by his influence and resources, I could fearlessly face Europe itself."

"Believe it not, Frederick; oh, believe it not!" cried Elizabeth, with pain, almost anguish, in her tones. "You know not my father as I do. You mistake him altogether. He is my father, and I am bound to honour him, but blind to the faults of his character I cannot be. It grieves me to the heart to say it, but he has a small mind though passably cultivated, and if he has any love for his children, he has far more for himself."

"That may be," returned Frederick. "Yet, beloved, he would never see the husband of his only daughter Elizabeth in need of help and not send him all that was at his command."

"His only surviving daughter," corrected Elizabeth. "You are wrong, Frederick, you are mistaken," she added in painful agitation. "If it suited the king's views and purpose, he would assist you; and if it did not, he would not hesitate to sacrifice you. Listen, whilst I relate to you an anecdote. It was in Scotland, and shortly before he came to England—I was little more than six years old, yet I remember

the incident as though it were but yesterday. The King possessed two dogs; he was very fond of the one, cared little for the other. One day it pleased him that the dogs should race together. At the goal was a dead bird which the winner was to bring to his feet. Bruce, his favourite, lost, and he caned it mercilessly with a small cane he held in his hand. The dog crouched, licking his feet. 'Let them run again,' he commanded; and turning to his favourite: 'If you do not bring me the bird this time, you shall be put to death.' Again the poor animal lost, and my father with no more feeling or regret than if the dog had been made of clay, ordered the dog to be killed."

"And he was obeyed of course," said Frederick, his voice trembling with anger.

"He would certainly have been obeyed, for who would dare to gainsay the King?" returned Elizabeth; "but as I saw the beautiful animal taken away by an attendant, in whose eyes, believe me, there were tears of compassion, though the King's face was cold and impassive as the very walls of Holyrood under which we stood, a sudden impulse seized me. I would save the dog, if it were possible; but child as I was I felt how hopeless it would be to appeal to my father, or to endeavour to change his mind. As soon as the attendant was out of sight I ran after him, my father little dreaming that treason was meditated. 'Macdonald,' I said to the attendant, 'Bruce must not be killed'—the dog was so named after Robert Bruce, the minister who crowned my mother—for you know that no bishop was present at the coronation. 'Smuggle him away; do anything you like with him; but his life must be spared. Killed he shall not be.' I verily and indeed believe the noble animal understood, for he crouched at my feet and licked my hands, and seemed by every means in his power to be thanking me for my rescue. 'But, Princess,' objected Macdonald, 'it is by the King's orders. An I were to disobey them, I should take the dog's place, and my life would pay the forfeit.' 'Nay,' I replied, 'the King shall never know; but even though it came to his knowledge, I would take the punishment. There should be no punishment; and in any case my life should suffer before yours, good Macdonald.' Macdonald was too glad to listen to me; he loved Bruce as much as I did; but he was perplexed. 'But how dispose of Bruce?' he asked. 'Where hide him that the King find him not?' 'Hide him!' I cried in childish anger; 'hide him nowhere. The country is wide enough. Send him up north or down south, where he will find a kinder master than he has found here, and where he will have free run and liberty. Stay, Macdonald, a thought strikes me. To-night messengers leave for England, bearing important despatches to my godmother, the great Queen Elizabeth. Send Bruce with the messengers. Bid them hold their peace. I will write a letter to my godmother, explaining the matter. Be in the quadrangle at five o'clock and I will bring you

the letter.' 'But, princess, I have heard say that Queen Elizabeth herself, great though she be, is hard and cold, and also has no great love for animals. It may please her to betray us to the King your father. She is also aged, and, it is thought, has not long to live.' 'Leave that to me, Macdonald; let your mind be at ease,' I replied. 'My godmother is large-minded and has noble qualities. Nothing moves her more than injustice—if it be the injustice of others, not her own. I will explain all to her. She will take Bruce to her heart and never betray us. Now go hide him till to-night, Macdonald, and at five o'clock fail not to be in the shadow of the quadrangle.'"

"That was showing mercy like my own Elizabeth," cried Frederick, interested in the narrative. "How did it all end? What became of Bruce?"

"I remember even now the difficulty that I had in writing that letter," smiled Elizabeth, "for I was but six years old, and my letters had been few and short and unimportant. It was my first lesson in diplomacy."

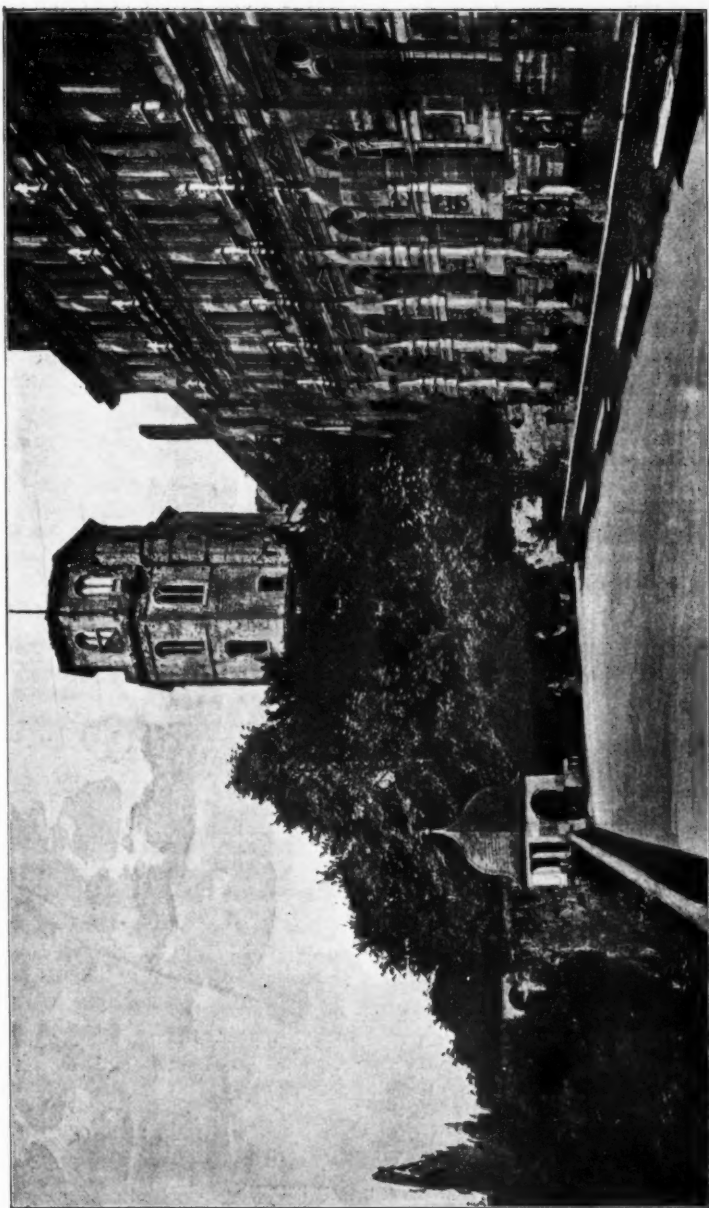
"Was it not rather intrigue, beloved?" laughed Frederick.

"Intrigue, if you will, *or treason*," smiled Elizabeth; "but it was in a good cause, and I call it mercy. It took me nearly my whole day to accomplish the performance, but I was an earnest dauntless child, and even at that age seldom failed in my little plans and desires. I wrote several letters before I felt that I had made the matter quite clear, both as to the beauty and noble nature of Bruce, and the injustice of sacrificing his life. I believe that I drew a graphic picture, and fear that I did not spare my father. Elizabeth of England had no great love for him, as I have since heard from many sources."

"Then why choose him to succeed her?" was Frederick's natural question.

"Because Elizabeth was proud," replied Elizabeth of Heidelberg. "No upstart should fill her throne. I have also thought that by choosing him as her successor, she thought she was in some measure atoning for the death of his mother, my unhappy grandmother Mary. It has always been borne in upon my mind that Elizabeth all through her life felt secret remorse for her execution. She pretended, when all was over, that though she had given the order, she never intended it to be fulfilled, even punishing those who had obeyed her too well in the matter. And when on her deathbed, past the power of speech, she was asked whom she would have to succeed her, she clasped her hands above her head to intimate that it should be the crowned head of James of Scotland. I have always thought, and I still think, it was conscience that prompted the action. She looked upon it as a sort of atonement. The mother had been put to death by her—the son should reign in her stead."

"It may be so," returned Frederick; "nay, it is more than probable. It is on our death-bed, doubtless, that our vision clears;



ELIZABETH'S TERRACE (WHERE THEY WALKED THAT MAY EVENING, 1619 : AND WHERE OLD FRITZ DECLARED HER GHOST APPEARED).

our sins find us out, and our evil deeds stand before us unclothed, free from all the glamour of sophistry, in their true colours. Elizabeth of England had a conscience."

"Ay, more than the world gives her credit for," replied Elizabeth of Heidelberg. "And more heart also. I believe that many of her vices arose from excess of virtue——"

"That is paradoxical," interrupted Frederick. "I do not take your meaning, beloved. The excess of virtue in my own Elizabeth points to no failings in her own temperament."

"You are prejudiced," laughed the gratified Elizabeth, blushing and pressing her husband's arm a little closer. "You are prejudiced, my Frederick, and know not half the weaknesses and shortcomings of your happy wife. With regard to my godmother, what I mean is that she had deep affections, a heart capable of intense love, craving a legitimate object on which to rest. It was the want of this object, this closest of all ties, that warped her really great—overwhelmingly great—nature. Jealousy of those who possessed it was the cause of all her malice, her bitterness, revenge, injustice. Elizabeth happily married, and I believe that her character would have softened, her angles have disappeared, her virtues have had fuller play."

"But she would not have been so great a queen," remarked Frederick. "My own feeling is that Elizabeth of England would not have found her true destiny in the domestic virtues."

"Perhaps not," sighed Elizabeth of Heidelberg. "Perhaps her talents were too transcendent. After all she had a great mission and fulfilled it to the utmost. What did she find England?—a fifth rate power: what did she leave it?—second to none; practically mistress of the world."

"But to return to Bruce," said Frederick. "Did your letter at last satisfy you, my Elizabeth? And was it despatched?"

"I think after the fourth attempt I managed to please myself, and to think that it was clear and to the point," laughed Elizabeth. "In my childish way, I fully stated the matter, begged my godmother not to betray me, to take Bruce to her heart and give him a happy life. I remember folding the letter, sealing it, and adding the superscription: 'To be delivered into the hands of the great Elizabeth, Queen of England. From her affectionate goddaughter, Elizabeth of Scotland. Written at our father's Palace of Holyrood.' For you know I was born there, my Frederick, and there we lived until we came to England. My father was born in the Castle. Child as I was, Holyrood seemed haunted with the ghost of my grandmother. The sad story had taken hold of my imagination. I used to dream about her; would think that I saw her pale face and sad eyes peering at me from the dark corners of many a room; could have declared that her ghost flitted up and down the little winding private staircase that led to her apartments. I was not sorry when we left it all and came to England. There the ghosts were all confined to the Tower

—and I never had much to do with the Tower. It is said that Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother, is often seen there, appearing at a certain window with a rose in her hand. Frederick, if we left this castle for Bohemia and things went wrong, and we lost our happiness, I believe that in the ages to come my spirit would haunt this terrace, where our days have passed as a dream."

"Then be sure I should not be far off," laughed Frederick. "Where my Elizabeth is, there would my spirit be, whether in this world or the next. But about Bruce? How did Elizabeth take the matter? Did she accept the charge? Was she faithful? Did she reply to you?"

"Your rapid questions leave me breathless," laughed the princess. "Elizabeth was always faithful," she added, though in the light of history her answer may be somewhat open to argument. "She sent me her answer by a special messenger, which was good of her; and it was verbal, not written, which was wise. 'Tell my goddaughter in private audience,' was her message, 'that she dwells in my heart. Add that her wishes shall be closely observed, and her confidence held sacred. And tell her that Elizabeth of England, whatever her failings, loves mercy and is the friend of those who show it. And deliver my message faithfully, or your head shall answer for it,' she added in her sharp, shrewd way to the messenger."

"And what became of Bruce, my Elizabeth?"

"As Macdonald said, the Queen was nearing the end of her life, though it was only quite at the last that she realised she was mortal and she too must die. But she was true to her word and gave Bruce to Sir Walter Raleigh, enjoining him to be good to it and never to part with it. I was afterwards told that in 1603, the dog accompanied him to the foot of the scaffold. He must have been good to it, for he had not possessed it many months."

"But how, my Elizabeth—the foot of the scaffold? How could that be, when Sir Walter Raleigh went to the scaffold only a few months ago?"

"You forget, my Frederick. Raleigh fell out of favour upon the Irish question. The learned and unfortunate Essex had been dead just two years. When my father came to England he and Raleigh could not agree. Raleigh was imprisoned, was tried at Winchester and sentenced. At the last moment, on the scaffold itself, the King pardoned him. Have you forgotten all this, Frederick?"

"Truly I had forgotten, but now it comes back to me, Elizabeth. Raleigh was never in favour with the King, and now at length on that Spanish matter he came by his end. But the people of England were with him, not with the King. And Bruce?"

"Bruce is dead," replied Elizabeth. "He lived to a good old age, and my father never knew that his commands had been disobeyed. Would that all such commands could come to naught."

"And Macdonald?"



FREDERICK, ELECTOR PALATINE AND KING OF BOHEMIA.
(From a Photograph by Von König.)



ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF BOHEMIA.

(From a Painting by Mireveldt, in the possession of the Writer.)

"Why, Frederick, Macdonald is with us here, my faithful friend and trusted retainer."

"Ah!" cried Frederick, "I knew not it was the same, but have always liked the man."

"No bribe on earth would persuade him to leave me," continued Elizabeth: "and if you become King of Bohemia—which I would fain hope may never be—you shall advance him to honour."

"His greatest honour is to serve you, my Elizabeth," returned Frederick, "and his greatest happiness. But about this said kingdom of Bohemia, this vexed question. The princes are urging me to accept; my own heart prompts it——"

"Rather say your ambition, my Frederick," interrupted Elizabeth. "I doubt if your heart has much to do with the matter."

"True, beloved," laughed Frederick, "for my heart is all yours; all and absolutely yours. So we will say my ambition—and, to some extent, my conscience. I think the whole Protestant world should rise up and make common cause against that dreaded Ferdinand. He is a fanatic of the worst kind; his character is morose and he loves cruelty. He has no bowels of compassion. When the Jesuits moulded his character they found it only too pliant to their purposes, and they did their work well. When Matthias promised him the Imperial Crown, he took a solemn vow to re-establish the Roman Catholic religion throughout his dominions and wherever else was possible. No amount of bloodshed or persecution should stay his hand. When Matthias abdicated the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary in his favour, he vowed to be a tolerant and humane monarch. How has he kept his word? So infamously that the poor Bohemians, driven to desperation, have risen in revolt against him and would shake him off. Thurn is a fine fellow, and given a proper army, would be more than a match for Tilly—who like his master loves cruelty. Thurn would have conquered at the siege of Vienna, but for the inopportune arrival of Bouquoi."

"There it is," said Elizabeth, her tones once more earnest and convincing—though Frederick, blinded, infatuated, was not to be convinced. "Observe, my Frederick, how there is always a *but* in these matters. *But* for Matthias, Ferdinand would not have been King of Bohemia and Hungary. *But* for Bouquoi, the Bohemians would not have been forced to raise the siege of Vienna and retreat discomfited. Beloved, the reins of the world are held in higher Hands than ours. It is useless for us to try to turn aside the purposes of Heaven. We should only be found kicking against the pricks."

"There spoke not my Elizabeth," argued Frederick. "Would you let wrong prevail, my love, and not make an effort to restore the right? That were indeed a strange creed."

"By no means," returned Elizabeth. "But I would first be

persuaded in my own mind that I was the chosen champion of Heaven to redress the wrong. Now I maintain that in the present instance if anything is clear it is that you are not Bohemia's champion—her good angel. You were never made for war, to take the command of armies, to put the enemy to rout, to become, as it were, a modern Cæsar. The situation is grave, and this is what is wanted, and what you cannot give."

"It is what I *will* give, beloved," cried Frederick the wilful, "with the strong arm of England to back me."

"You will never get it," returned Elizabeth, bursting into tears in her distress. "You will never get it. My father will never give it you. Do not deceive yourself, Frederick," she added, recovering her composure almost as soon as lost. "Had Elizabeth been on the throne, all would have been different. She sent subsidies and she sent men to fight for the Protestant cause. She would have sent you help now to the half of her kingdom; but I doubt if my father has the power to help you, even had he the will. His exchequer is well nigh empty. At heart I believe him to be a Roman Catholic. We must not judge him too harshly. No one could have been brought up in a more unfortunate atmosphere—everything by turns, and nothing long. His great ambition now is an alliance with Spain; he would have Charles marry the Infanta, but I doubt much Spain will make a fool of him and play him to their own ends. Buckingham can turn him as the wind turns a straw, and I always suspect Buckingham of greater ambition, of playing a deeper game than the King suspects. With his Spanish views, my father will never help you, Frederick: and if you are not careful—should you go to Bohemia and find yourself unable to accomplish the task of redressing its wrongs, methinks I see Spain stepping in and seizing the Palatinate."

Again Elizabeth was prophetic, but Frederick's eyes were withheld.

"It appears to me that James is growing tired of Spain," he said, "and will soon shake off the influence she now has upon his mind. The very fact of my accepting the crown of Bohemia may give a fresh bias to his uncertain temperament, and cause him to embrace my interests with heart and soul. It is not only conceivable—it is probable. Surely he has some natural affection?"

"He has none," replied Elizabeth, sighing deeply as she saw what little way she made with Frederick, and began to fear that for once her influence would fail. "He has no natural affection, my Frederick. You have heard what I have told you of the dog Bruce. I never before related the incident; I would not have mentioned it now, for it tells against my father, but I wished to open your eyes to the truth. And it is by no means a solitary instance of his acts of cruelty and injustice. There is a curse I sometimes think upon the Stuarts. Though my father felt his mother's death a disgrace, I believe that he equally felt it a relief. He feared and hated Elizabeth of England, but he never trusted his mother. His mind dwelt upon

the possibility of intrigues with Spain. As long as she lived, he feared she would offer Spain her lost crown. Could you expect anything else from the son of the wretched Darnley, and the vain and frivolous Mary of Scotland? But again I say we must not judge. She was brought up at the French Court—the worst of all courts—where everything sinful under heaven held sway, and where probably not a single good principle was instilled into her. No wonder if my father is without any real affection for anyone but himself. He will not hesitate to sacrifice you, my Frederick. A thousand times over would he do it, if it suited his purpose. Even in his marriage with Anne of Denmark, it was not love tempted the alliance, but nothing more important than to obtain undisputed possession of Orkney and Shetland, hitherto claimed by the Danes. That marriage brought new blood and new influence to the Stuarts. Will it be strong enough to turn the weaknesses of the Stuarts to strength? I doubt it, for my mother has not been very wise. They were ill-matched. Had Henry lived, he would have made a wise and good king. The English would have loved him as they have never loved my father. I often wonder how they tolerate him after such a monarch as Elizabeth——”

“Perhaps it is the very contrast that holds them loyal,” interrupted Frederick: “for human nature is so made that it loves a change, even when the change is for the worse. It possesses far more evidences of the Fall, than of the perfect condition before the Fall—always saving and except my own sweet wife, who is Queen of Hearts by right of her beauty and goodness. But poor Henry is no more, beloved—what think you of Charles?”

Frederick himself liked Charles, if only for his devotion to his sister. Charles was always very good to Elizabeth. When her eldest boy was drowned he grieved much. They were at that time—as they had long been—meeting even their ordinary expenses with the utmost difficulty, and when Elizabeth wrote to him, asking for money for mourning, which they could not otherwise procure, he sent her £1000. On more than one occasion he pledged his jewels in order to send her help when she could no longer get on without it, and when Charles himself found it difficult to meet his own expenses. It all proved that he possessed a heart capable of deep affections; and that had he married differently: married a wife devoted to him, throwing herself heart and soul into his interests, as Elizabeth did with Frederick: especially had Charles and Henrietta Maria been of one mind in that sword-bearing matter, the most uniting as the most dividing all earthly forces—RELIGION—the great tragedy of English History would probably never have happened, and Cromwell and his Interrugnum would never have been heard of.

“What think you of Charles?” asked Frederick, as they paced the Terrace.

“I love him dearly,” replied Elizabeth, “and there is much in him



PRINCE RUPERT.
(From a Photograph by Von König.)

to be loved. But he has not all Henry's graces and all his strength of mind and character."

"All the more reason that he should marry well," said Frederick. "If he could find another Elizabeth his career could only prove a success."

"Frederick, you spoil me," laughed Elizabeth; "you will make me vain and conceited—it is a family failing. But I would add to that remark another to the effect that a good wife's pleading should be listened to! A wise marriage would indeed be the making of Charles—but where is the wise bride? I look around and do not see her. My father would have him marry the Infanta, but Spain, or I am mistaken, has other views for its daughter. She will never be given to the son of James. I half fear his choice may fall upon Henrietta-Maria of France. She is but a child of ten, but no alliance with France can be for the good of England, whilst I doubt if the granddaughter of Catherine de Medici could possess the qualities that go to the making of a good wife. If Charles should marry Henrietta-Maria, I fear he and happiness will never sit together. Charles is a great mixture, and has much in him both of his father and mother. Much of his father's self-consciousness and vanity, so that he thinks literally, no matter what the King does, the King can do no wrong. He is not very far-seeing and his judgment often errs—there is where I seem to see trouble for him in the future. On the other hand, he possesses much fervent religion: and that, my Frederick, covers a multitude of sins, guides us safely over the shoals and quicksands of life, where otherwise we should make shipwreck."

Again she sighed deeply, for it was borne in upon her that her husband was now probably about to put to sea in a barque not all the wisdom of the world could bring back again to safe harbour.

In truth they were about to launch out upon troubled waters that would keep them tempest-tossed to the end of their lives. If Frederick had only listened to Elizabeth's pleading that night; only consented to be guided by her and renounce the crown of Bohemia; all would have been well with them; possibly a long and happy life, devoted to their children; peace and prosperity to the Palatinate; leaving behind them the record of an ideal existence. But it was not to be.

That evening was the turning point in Frederick's destiny. He might have chosen good; he chose evil—hoping indeed that it might prove good. The glittering bauble of the crown dazzled his vision and his better judgment; and from the day he accepted it, Elizabeth's life was one of sorrow upon sorrow.

She did all she could to dissuade him from it, but when once his choice was made, then like a good wife she made the best of it and threw herself heart and soul into her husband's career. The decree once past, she no longer opposed. Perhaps she too caught a little

of the spirit of his ambition. The daughter of a king, the granddaughter of a queen, it became a gratification to her to wear a crown in her turn, and to be called Queen of Bohemia.

But Elizabeth was a good and religious woman, and after all, her greatest hope was that Frederick would carry out the reforms so much needed; that oppressed Bohemia would be delivered from the yoke of bondage, and songs of triumph would once more sound through the land. She had once gauged too correctly her husband's inherent weakness: she had said that he was made for peace not for war; he should have had to do with the pruning hook, not with the sword. But the die cast, she threw away her fears; nay, she forgot that she had ever possessed them; and she read him through her own brave nature, judging him capable of reaching the heights she felt she could herself attain to.

It was all a mistake; a fatal mistake; of which for her the culminating point was reached on November 19th, 1632, when poor Frederick yielded up his broken and disappointed life; dying partly of a broken heart, partly of fever, partly of grief and regret at the death of Gustavus Adolphus, with whom departed his last hope.

And what could Elizabeth exclaim in her sorrow, but: "I can never have more contentment in this world, for God knows, I had none but that which I took in his company." Her presence chamber at the Hague was henceforth hung with black, and every anniversary of her husband's death was kept as a fast day. She had many children—no less than thirteen—but her sons, at any rate, were no great consolation to her. Sophia was the twelfth child, and marrying the Elector of Hanover, became the mother of George I of England: a king who was so very distinct and different from the Georges that succeeded him. Of all the sons—if we except Henry her first-born—Rupert was by far the best of them, and certainly the most filial. Rupert, Prince Palatine—Rupert of the Rhine—he who was afterwards to play so active a part in history, filling up so much of the canvas of his time; who is so romantic a figure; and was undoubtedly gifted with more than a spark of the sacred fire of genius.

Rupert has never been understood, never appreciated at his value, never received credit for the great qualities he undoubtedly possessed. He never sang his own praises, was modest and moderate in actions, and so many an inferior man was more esteemed.

He was great as a soldier, which undoubtedly was the vocation to which he was born; he was great as a man of science; great as an inventor, working himself at the anvil. He was a true artist. He would have made a great statesman, for he possessed far-reaching views, and an insight infinitely in advance of his time. He equipped an expedition, and sent it in search of the North West passage. He saw all the possibilities of the African trade, and would have commenced then what is being done two hundred years later. His energy and activity were phenomenal. In times of war his marches

were, like those of Gustavus Adolphus before him, inconceivably rapid. He advanced the science of war, and made a lasting change in the tactics of cavalry.

Rupert was true and loyal; far more loyal to King Charles than was Charles to him. He was only twenty-two when the Civil War broke out, yet such was the confidence reposed in him, so well-known his experience, the wisdom of his judgment, that the command of the King's army was unhesitatingly given to him, and he took it in full confidence. He inspired trust, the first condition necessary to a commander. Had he been twice his age, he would have succeeded; he might have succeeded as it was, under more favourable conditions. But his times and his surroundings were against him. He was a great general, but never had command of a disciplined army, or one that could do him any sort of credit.

He had enemies also. Henrietta-Maria felt his charm and power and hoped to convert him, but when she found his strong Protestant principles were unassailable, she turned against him. Having employed all her craft without success, she worked for his downfall, and in the end she and Digby undermined his influence with Charles. He had the misfortune to serve a weak king, and suffered accordingly.

He was so popular at one time that he was supposed to bear a charmed life. Then came Marston Moor and Naseby—and defeat. It was not his fault, but the fault of the King, who, not placing sufficient confidence in Rupert, sent him unwise instructions. He fought with the fatal order in his pocket, but he was brave and noble and loyal, and never produced it to justify his action. He suffered in silence, and like William of Orange might have been called Rupert the Silent. But his silence was more difficult than William's. Rupert was silent to his own personal detriment: William merely to save the lives of others.

Rupert's charm of manner was so great that he won over everyone with whom he came into contact. When he returned to England at the Restoration, he was received with every mark of honour. One would fain hope that he then proved a consolation to his mother. But he hated the gaieties and dissipation of court life; to the day of his death was a true, old-fashioned cavalier, high-minded, his brain never at rest. When he died he took with him a satisfaction known to few of the Stuarts—he had lived an earnest and devoted life to useful and good ends. His years had never been wasted in idleness and frivolity; he was never dissipated, and possessed few of the vices of his age. Such was Prince Rupert.

But to return.

The death of Gustavus Adolphus, at the very moment when Germany seemed at his command, was a blow Frederick could not get over. He had gone off to the wars, hoping to redeem that long-past mistake at the Battle of the White Hill, and to be reinstated in his rights. Had Gustavus Adolphus lived, this would have happened.

Dying, Frederick's hopes died also. It was the last blow, and perhaps the greatest. Once more life and fortune had begun to smile upon him. Hope revived is even stronger than hope first born. Once more his beloved Elizabeth should enjoy her proper rank, and



ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND.

(From a Painting by Zuccherò, in the possession of the Writer.)

be honoured in the eyes of the world. All hearts would rejoice at the prosperity of the Queen of Hearts. She had not lost one whit of her popularity; her sorrows and misfortunes had only endeared her the more to those about her. In 1632, her beauty had changed its character. Her cheeks had lost their roundness; the damask

roses had faded ; the dark eyes looked larger, and whilst they had once been laughing, they were now sad and serious. Grey threads were mingled with her dark locks. But what she had lost in the insouciant beauty of early youth, she had gained in refinement and depth of expression. There was a pathetic charm about Elizabeth's face at this time which appealed to all, and turned her would-be enemies in her favour.

To the very last she retained her hold upon her husband's heart. None could influence him as she. If prosperity came he welcomed it for her sake ; if misfortune, for her sake he wept. On his death-bed he thought only of her.

He died at Mayence, and they were unfortunately not together ; Elizabeth was denied the consolation of receiving his last sigh and closing his eyes to the world. His thoughts were only for her, and her name was continually upon his lips.

"Oh, Elizabeth ! Elizabeth !" was his constant cry on his last day. "What will my Elizabeth do without me ? Oh, that I had been warned by her in years gone by and never left our peaceful Heidelberg !"

Ay, so we all say, when we look back upon the might-have-been which we deliberately threw away ; wilfully went to the left when the right was free to us, and so wrecked and ruined our lives. It is useless afterwards to cry Peace, Peace, when there is no peace. All that remains is to make the best of the tangled threads and trust in the mercy of heaven. What indeed should we one and all of us do without the mercy of heaven ?

"Oh, Elizabeth ! Elizabeth !" cried poor Frederick ; "would that my dying could bring you peace and happiness, then should I not die in vain ; but it will only add to your sorrows, my beloved !" And he passed away with his wife's name upon his lips.

All this, however, was in the future on that May evening of 1619, of which we write, when Elizabeth pleaded and for once pleaded in vain. It was the throw of the dice ; the turning point in their lives ; she had failed, and was wise enough to see that all further efforts would be useless. She never pleaded again.

It was a calm still evening than which nothing on earth could be more beautiful. Twilight was passing into darkness ; the moon rose and flooded the landscape with silvery light, throwing a glittering pathway upon the river. As they looked out upon the scene from the Castle Terrace it seemed as though nothing could ever again disturb the peace and serenity of the world, and wars and rebellions, the cruelty of tyrants and the fanaticism of bigots, were but the dreams of a diseased imagination.

And then there rose upon the still air a burst of melody from the nightingales, who sang in those days even as they sing in these.

Frederick and Elizabeth listened entranced, as they had listened many and many a time in the last six years of their happy life. They

were both keenly susceptible to the influence, Elizabeth especially so; both loved the beautiful in whatever form they found it. How many a night had they paced the terrace—Elizabeth's terrace: built for her by Frederick, every stone weighted with his devotion—listening to the magic rapture of the nightingales. And to-night they listened again, but with very different emotions. In Frederick's heart there was elation, sorrow in Elizabeth's. She could not help it. A presentiment of coming evil lay upon her. Change of any sort she had never liked, and on this night amidst all this beauty and calm serenity of nature, she realized that no change could be for the better.

It was indeed a scene and an influence fitted for paradise. There was but one Heidelberg in the world.

They stood close to the stone coping overlooking the whole country. Frederick, lover-like, had placed his arm round his wife's waist; her head leaned upon his shoulder; the damask roses had faded to a delicate pink in the evening air. Their late conversation was occupying the mind of both.

"Then your decision is taken, my Frederick?" murmured Elizabeth. "And I have spoken to deaf ears."

"Never deaf when thou speakest, Elizabeth," returned Frederick. "But on this occasion—for this one and only time—I plead your own cause by not yielding. The day will come when you will acknowledge that I was right in my judgment and saw the future more clearly than you. The pleading of the princes, the cry of the Bohemians ring in my ears; I cannot disregard them, even if I would. As the cry of the oppressed Israelites stirred up Moses in the days of Pharaoh, so it seems to me have the Bohemians stirred up my heart to avenge their wrongs. Listen, beloved. Look around you. See the calm beauty of the evening, all the peace and serenity that lies like a benediction upon nature. Listen to the song of the nightingales poured out upon the air like a message from heaven of goodwill towards men. I take it all as an omen of the future. So will you reign, calmly and peacefully, shedding grace and blessing around you, when you are Queen of Bohemia. If this does not come to pass, then say to me, my Elizabeth, that I am no true prophet."

"And I," sighed Elizabeth, "only see in all this beauty and serenity, this divine peace lying, as you say, like a benediction upon the world, a full and sufficient reason, a more powerful argument than my poor speech can furnish, for remaining contented with our lot, twice blest of heaven, as it seems to me, and taking no blind leap into a dark and uncertain future. And now, my Frederick, I have said my last word; I plead no more. You are the master-mind"—but here Elizabeth knew she misjudged herself—"yours be the final decision. All I can say is that where Frederick goes, Elizabeth will follow. Whatever his choice, she will enter into it heart and soul.

If success befall, she will share it with him ; if sorrow and misfortune half the burden shall be hers."

And still the nightingales sang on, and there was no minor undertone in their melody to confirm Elizabeth in her prescient forebodings, or change the current of Frederick's elation to the more sober element of doubt and discretion. And so the die was cast. *It was to be.*

The distant clock over the entrance gateway struck the hour of ten, and still a light lingered in the western sky. One by one the clocks of the town at their feet took up the tale, and the vibrations floated away into the valley.

Elizabeth started. "I knew not it was so late," she cried. "We have been more than two hours upon the terrace, Frederick, and our evening meal has waxed late. Fortunately all is cold."

"Were it ten hours with you, my Elizabeth, they would pass but as a moment of time," returned Frederick, and the sincerity of his tone was even a greater compliment than the words he uttered. "I could be content to pass life at your side here for ever, and ask nothing further of Heaven," he added.

A strange speech, so utterly at variance with what had lately fallen from his lips.

"Then, oh, Frederick, let it be so," cried Elizabeth, convicting him, as it were, out of his own mouth. And who knows what might have been the result, had their attention not been withdrawn at the moment? A casement above them, in Frederick's beautiful building was hastily opened, a child's head was thrust forth, and a peal of happy childish laughter, in which was a distinct tone of mischief, rang upon the air. The child had wakened, escaped from his bed, and run to the window to look at the moon ; and seeing his father and mother on the terrace, had opened the casement and greeted them with his fearless laughter.

In the dark-complexioned boy, with his black curly hair and large dark brown eyes, one traced a likeness to both parents. He was an indulged, but not spoilt child. His age was just five, and there was much in him that was both physically and mentally noble. Two other children were born to them at Heidelberg—Charles Louis, who behaved so unfilially to his mother, and Elizabeth.

At sound of the childish laughter, Frederick and Elizabeth both turned—and the chance of taking Frederick's mind on the rebound was lost.

"It is Henry, our first-born and best beloved," cried Elizabeth, and taking a handkerchief from her pocket, she waved it to the child.

Elizabeth was dressed with great richness this evening, as was her wont, and wore her favourite black satin, much trimmed with lace ; but she wore no ruff, though her dress was cut low in the neck, and perhaps she knew how well the contrast set off the snowy whiteness of her neck and shoulders. For ornament she wore nothing but



PRINCE RUPERT.
(From a Photograph by Von König.)

strings of large pearls given her on her marriage by the City of London, probably the very pearls that have become historical in her portraits. In her ears were the large pearl drops given to her by her husband, and from one of them fell the lock of hair she was so fond of wearing, and which may be seen in her portraits—the hair of her favourite and lost brother Henry.

Black satin, we have said, was her favourite material. She was betrothed in it at Whitehall, in December, 1612, for she was still in mourning for her favourite brother Henry, after whom her first-born was named. And even this is said to have been a source of grievance to James, who, vain and conceited at all times, thought the child should have been named after him. But though Elizabeth preferred black satin, she looked best in white. It showed off to perfection her dark eyes and magnificent dark hair, whilst neither black nor white could detract from the fairness of her skin. The dresses worn at her wedding must have been gorgeous, and the jewels which decked the Royal Family alone were said to be worth a million of money. It pleased James to be lavish on the occasion, and he almost ruined himself in the extravagance of his entertainments.

"It is Henry," cried Elizabeth, her voice thrilling with maternal love. "Oh, Frederick! my heart misgives me that we should have so named him. He is so like my lost brother. A presentiment seizes me at times that he will have a similar fate, and die in his youth."

"That is a mere nervous fancy, love," returned Frederick; "you should put it from you. The boy is strong and healthy, and by Heaven's grace will live to a good old age."

"Mamma, may I come to you?" shouted the little fellow, for he habitually spoke to his mother in English.

"Naughty Harry!" cried the fond mother. "Why art thou not in thy little bed, fast asleep, dreaming of the angels?"

"The angels came and woke me," returned the child, "and I saw the moon coming in at the window, and then I saw you and daddy. May I come?"

At this moment an attendant appeared at the window, summoned from an adjoining chamber by the boy's voice. She would have transported him back to bed, but he clung to the casement, and who could resist the pleading "May I come? May I come?" Not those who listened.

"Wrap him in a warm shawl," cried Frederick to the attendant, "and bring him down. The night is warm; he will take no harm."

And presently the little white night-gowned figure, shoes on his feet, a crimson silk shawl about his arms and chest, ran on to the Terrace, closely followed by the attendant, and was caught in his father's arms and swung high in the air.

"Why are you not asleep?" asked Frederick.

"The angels woke me," persisted the boy: and all through his life, cut short as Elizabeth's forebodings had seen, he would declare that

angels came to him at times and woke him. Perhaps they did so. And we may be sure that when, ten years from that evening, the boy was drowned, the angels were at hand to take him through the dark valley. Frederick and his son, the light of his father's eyes, were upon the sea in an open boat with their attendants. The water was rough, the wind fitful: a hasty movement on someone's part to secure the flapping sheet, and the boat was upset. All were lost save Frederick, and even he escaped only by virtue of his strength in swimming. But for the thought of his wife, it is probable that he would have gone down into the depths with his first-born.

"The angels woke me," said Henry on that memorable May evening of 1619. "And then I did see you and mamma on the Terrace. Is it very very late?—the middle of the night?"

And so the child prattled on, now flinging his arms round his father's neck, now stretching them towards his mother, who in her delicate state of health could not attempt to take him into her own arms. The boy was healthy and high spirited and happy, yet with a thoughtfulness about him beyond his years.

"God for ever bless thee, my son," murmured Elizabeth, as she fondly kissed the child; and then with a last throwing of the little arms round the father's neck, who also gave him his blessing, he was transferred to the attendant, and taken off to bed, looking back at his parents until the covered archway took him beyond their view.

The angels may have wakened him that night; why did they not whisper to him to plead with his father for the mother's wish? He little dreamed that a decision had been taken which was a turning point even in his own fate. Did not the perfectness of the scene, the intense domestic happiness, on which scarcely a shadow lingered, suggest to Frederick that he would do well to reconsider his determination, and reject the crown of Bohemia? If so, he kept it to himself; deliberately thrust it from him, almost as we would put away a temptation to commit evil.

They quitted the Terrace, but did not yet enter the Castle. The night was irresistibly beautiful. They wandered through Elizabeth's English garden, which Frederick's devotion had laid out with such care; they threaded the Maze, and Elizabeth made some allusion to poor Rosamund and the vengeance of Elinor; they passed through groves of trees, and found themselves under Elizabeth's Triumphal Arch, and wandered to the groves beyond, absorbed in each other, revelling in the balmy night, the splendid moon which threw such weird shadows across their path; entranced by the rapturous song of the nightingales, in which still there was never a minor note to warn them of their overshadowing fate.

And again the clocks chimed, and the hour was eleven.

As they turned, finally, to enter the Castle, and to partake of their cold and delayed collation before retiring for the night, they observed two figures pass under the triumphal arch and slowly approach.

These proved to be Colonel Schomberg, Frederick's major-domo and trusted friend, and Duke Christian of Brunswick who had unexpectedly arrived at the Castle.

Both men were devoted to Elizabeth. Colonel Schomberg had long been indispensable to Frederick, and became equally so to Elizabeth, for she conquered his heart as she conquered all hearts. He it was who took her expenditure in hand and arranged her pin money. She knew and appreciated his value, and he enjoyed her special favour, of which he was worthy. As for Duke Christian, Elizabeth's cousin, he had loved her from the days of his boyhood, became her champion when trouble fell upon her, her cypher was conspicuously embroidered on his scarf, and the motto "For GOD and her," and in his helmet he carried her glove. He was known as the Mad Brunswicker, but there was nothing mad about him, unless it was courage and bravery carried to the point of rashness. He died all too soon in 1626, when fortune seemed for ever to have turned her back upon the unhappy Frederick and Elizabeth.

They now went forward to meet the new arrival. Duke Christian bared his head and bowed low as he stooped and kissed the hand of the Princess.

"Fair cousin," he said, "I am happy but in your presence. Forgive this late and unexpected arrival, but——"

"But you bring me fresh news, further news," interrupted Frederick with some excitement. "The Bohemians have taken action—or perhaps no longer desire me for their king?"

"On the contrary," replied Christian. "They are more anxious than ever, and would have you hasten——"

"Christian," interrupted Elizabeth, "it is ill talking to hungry ears. A cold collation awaits us in the small banqueting room. Let us repair thither, and presently you shall discuss your business with Frederick. Colonel Schomberg, you will join us. Lend me the support of your arm, so that these arch conspirators may proceed together."

But at that moment, from the slopes below the Castle Terrace, which they partly overlooked from the Avenue, there rose upon the air the sound of a trumpet, beautifully played: its theme a love song. They listened for a few moments until the melody came to an end, and then Elizabeth exclaimed, half laughing, half in vexation:

"Surely my devoted trumpeter! It is long since he was heard, and I thought he had been banished."

"He was banished," cried Colonel Schomberg, "and has never set foot in Heidelberg for three years. Now he has the temerity to return, and it is too much. What shall be done to him, Prince?"

"What can I do to anyone for falling in love with the Princess?" returned Frederick. "It is inevitable. The poor trumpeter but follows the world. Probably he is in Heidelberg for a short time, and we shall not be troubled with him. Where was it he went to?"

"To Säkkingen," returned Colonel Schomberg; "and the sooner he returns there the better. They say he trumpets there to perfection."

They paused and listened, but the air was not taken up again. It was indeed the Trompeter von Säkkingen, but whether his courage failed him after that one attempt, or whether he merely wished to intimate to the Queen of his heart that in spite of banishment he was still faithful, certain it is that Frederick was right, and they heard him no more. He was, indeed, never heard again in Heidelberg. But later, when he had wooed and won a lady of high degree, there came to him one morning by a trusty messenger, a packet, which was no sooner delivered into his hand than the messenger departed. On being opened it proved to be a silver trumpet, and on a dainty white card bearing the device of a true lover's knot in gold and silver thread, were the words: "From one who wishes you all happiness in life." Though there was nothing to indicate, the Trompeter knew that it came to him from the Queen of Bohemia.

On this night, when they listened again for the trumpet and listened in vain, they turned away, Elizabeth supported by the arm of Colonel Schomberg. The lights and shadows of the moon chequered their path as they passed under the triumphal arch, and turning to the left reached the grand entrance and passed through into the great courtyard, now flooded with moonlight. Then the four entered Frederick's-building, where in a small banqueting hall, brilliantly lighted, a table was spread with cold viands, and rare wines threw their coloured reflections upon the snow-white cloth and gleaming silver.

Elizabeth of Bohemia must ever remain one of the most interesting characters in the pages of history. By virtue of her birth and connexions; by virtue of the times she lived in; by virtue of her extreme grace and beauty and her intellectual endowments; by virtue of her troubles and sorrows great beyond those of most mortals, and ending only on that February 13th, 1662, when she died in her chair in Lord Leicester's house in Leicester Fields, Leicester himself being then at Penshurst. Above all, is she interesting by reason of her pure and virtuous life, in an age not famous for its moral heights. Never a word of scandal tarnished by the faintest breath the mirror of her fair fame, for like the famous Chevalier Bayard of old, she was ever *sans peur et sans reproche*.

But all this was in the far future, on that momentous night of May, 1619. They knew not what was before them, when they passed into the well-lighted banqueting hall; and Elizabeth graced the board by her beauty and her wit, and her cavaliers vied with each other in doing her honour. Let us leave them so; happy in the present, and shedding happiness on all around them.

BROKEN IDEALS.

BY LADY MARGARET MAJENDIE.

CHAPTER XIX.

AS the horrors of the Reign of Terror rolled on, through the terrible autumn months of 1793, the little party in the quiet house in the Rue Antellis lived unmolested. Daily rumours came to them of the events taking place in the heart of the city, and all round them the signs of the times showed themselves in the fierce demoralisation of the humbler neighbours. Now and then among them a violent uprising took place as each new and appalling event occurred.

Day by day crowds went by singing and shouting on their way to the place of the guillotine. The people were drunk with blood; and as the winter set in and gaunt want began to be felt, they grew more brutalised.

The weeks of sickening suspense passed on, and Hermon Dol never came home. In these terrible days Madame Merline's beautiful hair turned quite white, and Diane's eyes grew worn and strained. They never ventured beyond the four walls of their little garden, except for the daily expeditions to buy the necessaries of life, and sometimes in errands of charity among the very poor.

The worst of it was that Adrien was beginning to find the confinement of his life unbearable; all day long within doors, constantly on the alert so as to fly to his place of concealment on the slightest alarm, at night only could he take exercise in the tiny garden. Long before he would have tried to make good his escape, but he could not leave his sister and aunt without even the small protection of his presence in the house. His health began to fail, he could neither eat nor sleep, and had to struggle against nervous depression.

One bright morning in October Diane was walking swiftly through one of the little back streets in which she was wont to shop. She had a basket on her arm and wore her hood well over her face.

Suddenly to her consternation she heard the well-known and dreaded sound of an approaching crowd, the shouts of loud defiance, trampling of many feet, fierce oaths, and above all the mad merriment of the lawless. Diane glanced right and left, and perceiving that the shop-owners were rapidly putting up their shutters, she ran hastily forward to the door of a little shoe-maker's shop whom she knew, and begged him to let her in. The man was good-natured, he pulled her roughly but kindly into shelter, and had only time to lock and bar the door before the tumult burst into the street.

"Come on to the roof, citoyenne," said the man, Jean Bonat by name. "My wife is there. She is not strong enough for the fun in the streets, so she goes up there, and *dame!* she sees and enjoys all that is going on."

Diane ran up the narrow ladder-stair to which he pointed, and found herself on a roof with a wooden parapet. Bonat's wife was there, kneeling and waving her arms and shouting, and down below the noise was becoming deafening. Someone had started the Marseillaise, and it rose in a thundering roar, broken with shrieks and laughter.

"Peace, peace, my wife! this is too much," cried the little shoemaker, puffing and blowing; but she shook off his hand, violently shrieking: "*A bas les traîtres! Vive la Nation.*"

"*Dame!* she will have hysterics again, the foolish woman!" exclaimed the unhappy man, turning with a deprecating look to Diane. But Diane's eyes were fixed on the rushing, surging crowd with a look of horror.

"See, see!" she exclaimed. "*Miséricorde*, he will be killed!"

"Who? what? where?" cried Bonat.

"There, the boy! do you see?"

"No child has any right to be there. What is his mother about?" grumbled Bonat.

"Oh, the monster, the brute!" cried Diane passionately.

In the crowd below one of those miserable boys about eleven or twelve years old, who hung about the streets living on the hideous excitement of the times, had found himself in the very thick of the press. The little urchin feeling at a disadvantage among people bigger than himself, suddenly clambered, like the monkey he was, on to the back of the man in front of him, a huge workman in a blouse; this man, in a state of brutal excitement, seized the boy by the arm and flung him furiously off; he pitched down among the tramping, hurrying mob, and it seemed as if they must have all passed over him, for he was altogether lost to view.

The crowd pressed on, growing thinner, then into mere stragglers; finally the street was clear, except that on the side of it lay a little heap of torn and ragged humanity.

Madame Bonat had subsided into the hysterics so much dreaded by her husband, and Diane scrambled down the ladder as fast as she could go, unlocked the door, and rushed into the street.

The boy was quite insensible and at first she feared that he was dead. The pinched, ugly little face was livid, but bending down she found that his heart was beating; she felt his limbs and found to her relief that they were unbroken.

Diane turned, intending to ask for help from Bonat, but seeing her occupation he had run down and hastily shut and barred the door behind her.

In her basket she had a little bottle of cordial, and quickly opening this, she forced a few drops between the boy's teeth, and she rubbed

and chafed his hands, and loosened his shirt round the throat. After a few minutes he suddenly gave a gasping sigh and looked up.

Diane started.

"Ha! Jeanniot Goulot! is it you? My poor boy, are you much hurt?"

The boy sat up, he breathed with difficulty.

"Not hurt, citoyenne, only knocked out of breath. Ah!"

"I hope there are no ribs broken?" said Diane anxiously.

Jeanniot shook his head.

"No, no, I am made of india-rubber. I am only squeezed flat. I shall rise up again unless the patriots pass this way once more."

"Could you walk a little way, my friend?"

"Yes. Will you take me in? You need not be afraid; I know all about the *ci-devant* concealed in your house."

"Oh, Jeanniot, you have not betrayed us? What do you know?"

"I have sat on the garden-wall more than once, and watched you all through the trees by moonlight! *Ci-devant* Lagrange, released from prison, and put on the proscribed list the next day—ah!" and he gasped.

"Lean on me, Jeanniot," said Diane, as the boy struggled to his feet. "So—come slowly and do not try to speak."

Fortunately they had not far to go, for Diane had hardly got him through the garden-gate when he fainted again.

Madame Merline came out, and they carried him in and laid him on a bed.

"His poor little body is very thin," said Madame Merline. "I am sure he is nearly starved. Here, Diane, take these essences. I will fetch a good bowl of soup from the kitchen."

She was right. The boy on his return to consciousness ate the soup with a voracity which touched their hearts, and after a good meal he was sufficiently recovered for them to feel that they might ask questions.

Diane began first. She had been fomenting with vinegar and warm water the bruises on his chest and ribs, and he felt relieved and comfortable. The crumpled imp-like face relaxed into more childlike and pathetic lines.

"Tell me, Jeanniot," said Diane, "you have told no one of my brother's presence here, have you?"

"Not yet," said the boy. "But I meant to do so soon, it was so amusing."

"But you will not now, dear Jeanniot."

"I never betray those that are kind to me," said the boy with dignity. "No. I will, on the contrary, protect him."

"That is right. We will believe and trust you, my friend. Now tell me, why are you so starved? Surely, good Achille Goulot, your father, is not in want?"

"Nay, but I have left my father," said the imp. "He wished to

control my actions—imagine! and I am employed by the nation, and they call me '*le petit mouchard* Goulot!'"

"So you left home? Did not that grieve your mother?"

"No, she has a new baby, a brat five weeks old, and she thinks of nothing else. I went to my father one day when times were bad, and he kicked me out. Mariette gives me a piece of bread from time to time. I am not often very hungry. The patriots employ me to watch each other. Ah, ha! I could tell you secrets you would like to know. Citoyenne," he said suddenly and wistfully, "I have one great wish, and you could perhaps give it to me."

"What is it, my child?" said Madame Merline, looking with motherly eyes at the miserable little figure before her.

"Have you any sugar or jam or anything sweet? All these months I have had bread and onions, and sometimes a sausage, and coffee of ground peas, but I long and I long and I long for sweet things."

Madame Merline smiled.

"You shall have sugar, my child," she said, "and sweet preserves. Diane, we have some left?"

"I will fetch it," said Diane brightly, and she came back with a dish of preserved mirabel plums. The boy's eyes sparkled with a hungry rapture when he saw it. The craving for sweet things had become almost a passion.

"It is good, it is good," he exclaimed, devouring it with ecstasy.

Diane watched him with an agony of anxiety in her eyes. The thought that the safety, the very life of her brother depended on the goodwill of this little ragamuffin terrified her. He looked up from his feast with a gleam in his eyes.

"Jeanniot is never ungrateful, citoyennes," he said. "You have been good to me, your *ci-devant* is safe as yet, and I will tell you what you most wish in the wide world to know."

Diane clasped her hands.

"Ah, Jeanniot," she said sorrowfully, "what can you tell me?"

"I can tell you where Citizen Hermon Dol is."

"Jeanniot, oh, ask what you will of me, I will do it! There is nothing I will not do for you, my friend, if you will tell me that."

"One must make one's bargain," said the imp, looking up with cunning in his black bead-like eyes. "May I come here when I cannot get food elsewhere, and when I come, be sure of a dinner and a dish of sweet preserves?"

"I will swear it, Jeanniot."

"Then I will be your friend—and *le petit mouchard* Goulot never swears friendship without meaning it."

Diane held out her hand and he shook it solemnly.

"Now I will tell you," he said. "Citizen Hermon Dol is in the Luxembourg, imprisoned *en secret*, not on the ordinary denouncing of a patriot, but by secret order of Robespierre."

The two women looked at each other with ashy faces. The boy glanced from one to another, and said lightly :

"Come, courage, citoyennes, he is not dead, he is only put out of the way because he is troublesome in the Convention ; he opposes all truly patriotic measures. They were afraid of his speaking for some of the prisoners, but that danger is over—they are dead. Perhaps now Robespierre may not fear to release him."

"Have you heard anything more ?" said Diane hoarsely. "Only tell me the truth, Jeanniot, and there is nothing we will not do for you."

"Just this, citoyennes : there are some amongst us who say that Hermon Dol is missed, that since he disappeared things have gone from worse to worse. He is loved by the people."

Diane covered her face with her hands.

"I must think," she murmured. "I must think."

Madame Merline's lips were moving in secret thanksgiving. She had dreaded death. Even to hear that her darling was in one of the secret cells of the fatal Luxembourg was an untold relief.

They kept little Jeanniot all that night, sleeping in a warm soft bed, with cooling ointments on his bruises, and a bowl of sugar to nibble by his pillow. Adrien himself came in and sat long by the boy gleaning from him all the news and gossip of the streets.

In the early dawn they gave him his breakfast, and he sped away into the streets, bidding them farewell with the remark that he had business to do all through the day.

Long and anxiously the three consulted together over the little *mouchard's* news, and they made up their minds that an application must be made to Robespierre, and the question was in what form it should be made. There was no ground on which to appeal to his sentiment—Robespierre had always hated and of late despised the moderates. An appeal to his mercy would be obviously useless. Finally they wrote between them a letter which must prove successful or else eminently perilous to themselves. Diane wrote it in strong fearless words asking for the release of her husband on the ground that the people loved him and had need of him, that he was a true patriot, had been originally elected by the Tiers as their député to the States-General, and was actually now a member of the Convention, and, as such, sacred. Robespierre, the incorruptible, must see that against such a man no accusation could stand ; he was as pure and proved a patriot as himself, and if Robespierre felt himself unable to right the wrong, his friends were prepared to call upon the people to vindicate their choice and restore to liberty their favourite.

The letter was signed by both the wife and mother of the prisoner and sent off that morning.

CHAPTER XX.

THERE was no answer to that bold application, and two or three days passed in the most dire suspense. Both Diane and her mother knew that the answer might come in the shape of arrest for them both, but fear, for themselves had no place in their hearts.

On the fourth day after the despatch of their letter the end came.

The little party were seated at their midday dinner, a very simple one now, when from the distance came to their ears the fateful roll of drums and murmur of an approaching mob.

Diane looked anxiously at her brother.

"Quick, Adrien dear," she said. "To your hiding-place. See! take some food with you, for who knows how long you may have to remain there?"

Adrien sighed heavily.

"This life is dying a hundred deaths," he said gloomily. "Would it not be better to end it once for all?"

"Adrien, dear brother, for my sake."

He could not resist the pleading tone, but went wearily to his hiding-place, for the drums and shouts grew nearer and finally burst into a yell as heavy hands beat loudly on the garden-door.

The two ladies went out together to open it. One look they gave each other to brace up their strength, and a quick short prayer went up to God that they might have courage to die bravely.

Madame Merline unlocked the door, and the chains fell back with a rattle. It seemed as if in one second of time the garden was full of a shouting, singing, dancing mob. Diane instinctively caught her mother's hand and held it fast. The scene was swimming before her eyes, the riotous men and women, the merriment and strange joy and triumph; for now the shouts became louder and more shrill, the mob suddenly parted and gave place, and through the midst walked forward a tall figure with outstretched arms and misty eyes. One wild irrepressible cry from Diane and she was locked in her husband's arms.

There was no time for explanation, the mob was circling round them, shaking hands with the mother and the wife, shouting congratulations, weeping tears of hysterical sympathy. They swarmed all over the house, brought out all the scanty contents of the cellar, and drank loudly to their healths. Then they forced a table out of the open window and forcibly mounted Hermon Dol upon it, calling upon him for a speech.

And Hermon spoke once more with all his ringing eloquence. He seized upon the fact of the moment, the rapture of the mob not in destroying but in saving human life. He spoke of the divine in human nature, the spark that never dies, and they listened. Sated

with horrors, nauseated with carnage, the fine words fell on their heated brains like the rain on parched earth, like the grateful shadow in the noonday heat. Hermon grew more impassioned as he spoke of what had been achieved, and he burst forth into the eulogy of Liberty and drew a picture of what Liberty might mean. And the people listened; listened to an ideal set before them so noble and strong and pure that their hearts thrilled, and they looked on their blood-stained hands and knew that it was too late for them, and they wept. The orator had lighted the fire of reaction, and when his words were ended and down streets and alleys they swooped on their homeward way, the heart-hunger for better things had begun to gnaw.

The little family were alone at last, and Diane gazed on her husband's face with a long-drawn sigh of "At last, at last!"

They sat long into the night talking, Diane holding Hermon's hand as if fearful of letting it go for one moment. All felt that although released and treated as a popular idol, the position of their beloved hero was one of extremest danger. Robespierre had yielded to the covert threat their letter contained, an appeal to the people might have inconvenienced him then, but they could not doubt that he had become an implacable enemy.

The plan that Hermon proposed was simply to obtain permission and a passport to return to his property in the country. He believed that he should find the place much as he had left it. It was his wish to start a model estate, to sell land to the peasants at low rates and form a class of peasant proprietors, to found schools, to educate and elevate. He wished to turn to practical account all the privileges gained in the first years of the revolution, when the world looked on amazed at the sight of a people and a king in combination against the abuses of the centuries, before unhappy France turned liberty into licence, and triumph into raving madness.

This Utopian plan Hermon elaborated into a long and carefully written letter to Robespierre, and at the end he begged for passports for himself and his family, consisting of his wife, his mother and his grandfather.

Diane looked at Adrien and smiled.

"I will make you up as an admirable grandfather," she said.

Adrien nodded his acquiescence, but after the women were gone he and his brother-in-law discussed the plan with an acute sense of its slender chance of success.

"If I can only get out of this appalling charnel-house, Paris," he said, "I must at once try to make my way to England to see what I can do for my poor father and mother. The impossibility of hearing of them has added tenfold to my anxieties."

But Hermon dissuaded him. He himself felt very confident that the exiles were in good hands and had a powerful friend in Sir Harry Locke. Adrien had never heard of this man, and was greatly relieved.

He yielded to Hermon's entreaties that he would, at all events for the present, follow their fortunes. Both were exceedingly doubtful about Robespierre's willingness to let them go.

But they were wrong. Robespierre was glad to be rid of a man who would certainly use his marvellous gifts of eloquence and popularity against the more and more stringent measures he meant to adopt. On the following morning the permission to leave Paris and the passports arrived.

Hermon and his family were ready to depart within ten minutes of receiving them. Their preparations had been made during the night; a carriage hired, all in readiness. There should be no time to retract.

At the very moment of their departure, Jeannot's little figure, breathless with the speed with which he had come, dashed up to the door and twisted himself in.

Diane was standing ready; cloaked and hooded, she took his hand and led him into the house, and made him sit down to gain breath. When he could speak he said in a gasping voice:

"Citoyenne, I was at the gendarmerie dépôt and an order came in to arrest an old citizen, Dol by name, grandfather of Hermon Dol on the passport, at the *barrières* to-day, and so I have come, and for your sake I will save your *ci-devant*."

"God bless you, Jeannot, you will save my brother's life?" cried Diane.

"Your brother?" cried the boy. "Yes, I will save your brother. See, there is no time to lose. Have you any spare clothes? If you can transform him into a woman, an old bent woman, I can hide him as my mother, and, you may trust me, we will join you before many days."

"Jeannot," said Diane earnestly, "I do trust you with all my heart, but how is it possible?"

"I have a passport here," said the boy mysteriously. "It is a permit for a woman and a boy; it was got for the widow of a butcher in our street. She was going back to her native village, and she was denounced by one of our Section for carrying letters to prisoners in the Abbaye prison. When they took her away I secured her papers. I thought they might serve for you and me if the worst came to the worst."

The travellers took out one of their boxes from the carriage, and quickly got out a gown of Madame Merline's, and the large flapping peasant coif once worn by Diane. They were too anxious, too full of the awful risk they were running even to smile, but the little *mouchard* laughed outright as Adrien's slender figure disappeared in cloaks and petticoats, and Madame Merline tied the cap firmly down on his head. He had to walk a good deal bent to diminish his height.

But the last moment had come and they must part. Diane and Madame Merline embraced him with irrepressible tears, and at the last moment Diane turned to Jeannot and said:

"I have left out all the preserves that are left for you, my friend. Be faithful, and come as soon as you can. And oh, Jeanniot, I trust you with all my heart."

She bent down and kissed the boy on the brow.

They entered the carriage and drove heavily away. The driver, a countryman, weary of the scenes in Paris, was glad to go.

At the *barrière* they were stopped, and the officials were puzzled and thwarted by the absence of the supposed elder Dol, for whom they were waiting. Hermon explained elaborately that he had changed his mind, that at the last the charms of Paris had proved too great to give up, and after a long and sickening delay they were permitted to proceed on their way.

When left alone together, Jeanniot turned to the disguised Adrien, and said in a tone of extreme gravity:

"Citizen, *ci-devant*, I wish to make a bargain with you. You cannot stay here now; when they miss you at the *barrière* they will certainly send to search this house, and perhaps burn it down. I mean to conduct you to a safe place for the present, and when the hue and cry is over, we will follow them to Chateauleroux; but first, I cannot do this for nothing."

"I will reward you, my friend," said Adrien. "But I must warn you that you are running into great danger, and I shall only be able to reward you if I escape with my life, and ever again possess any property."

"What I ask is this, citizen. I know the danger, but if we escape, will you keep me as your servant? Will you let me stay with you always? I will serve you faithfully, and I will be good."

The boyish words brought a sudden look of youth into the wizened little face.

Adrien was touched.

"My boy," he said, "I swear to you that you shall remain with me, and I will be as faithful to you as you have been to me and mine."

Jeanniot took his hand and kissed it.

"To the death, monseigneur," he said.

Then dismissing the subject he explained his plan to Adrien. They were to start at once walking quietly together through the streets actually to the Faubourg St. Germain. Jeanniot informed him that his own father's house stood gaunt and empty, with broken windows and open doors, that the grass was growing through the paved courtyard, and the iron gates hanging on their hinges. In two of the lower rooms lived an honest couple who cared for nothing but the struggle to keep alive in these bad times, and Adrien could spend the day safely, sleeping in an attic, and at night wander at will through his own empty halls.

Walking through the streets was dangerous enough, and Adrien found it difficult to shorten his stride, to preserve his bowed figure and hobbling gait, but no one noticed him. People were all

intensely occupied with their own concerns. Many of the viragoes of the Revolution affected a manly, or a rolling stride, and Adrien, with a tri-coloured rosette fastened by his little guide on his breast, passed for one of them, and was left unmolested, for people held these furies in fear and detestation.

They reached their destination at a favourable moment; some popular clamour had attracted the passers-by down the street, and they passed easily and unnoticed into the house.

In this deserted hotel they lived for several days. Adrien did not venture into the streets, but Jeanniot brought in all the news; he repeated the sullen murmurs of the people who were growing more and more sick of blood and cruelty. Day after day the lists of the condemned were longer, the death roll more merciless.

At last the moment came. Jeanniot appeared one day leading Diane's old favourite saddled with the market saddle and baskets of Mère Perrine. The pony had been kept all this long time in Achille Goulot's stable and been used by him.

Jeanniot invited Adrien to sit upon Zi-zi as the peasant women sat, and quietly leading the rough little beast, he led the way to the *barrière*. Honest peasants going home with their empty basket, and their papers of permission in good order, raised no comment, and they were allowed to leave Paris.

By night they were far out into the still country, gazing up at the white pure moon, and drinking in the sweet freshness of the dew-drenched grass, with the rapture of contrast to the fever-heat and tainted atmosphere of the reeking city.

CHAPTER XXI.

A GREY drizzling fog hung over the streets of London on the day on which the sad exiles bore their dead to the last resting-place. In those days no woman attended funerals, but Renée felt that she could not let her brother-in-law go alone, so she followed with him in the little procession, having drawn a thick veil over her face to hide it from the curiosity of the idle spectators.

His old friends would hardly have recognised Henri de Lagrange in the bowed broken man before them; the old haughty pride, the faint supercilious sneer, the selfish self-absorption; all were gone, leaving in their place a look of quiet misery and deep distress.

Round the open grave at the great public cemetery the mourners found a group of their fellow countrymen assembled, old friends, now exiles like themselves all engaged in the hard battle of life, men who had snatched an hour from their work or leisure to pay the last honour to one whom they had known as one of the most charming members of the once brilliant society of Paris.

As they reached the spot Henri de Lagrange raised his bowed head

and saw them. They came round him eagerly, with voluble kindly words, and eyes full of tears of sympathy, but with one glance into his haggard face they paused and fell back with the strenuous hand-clasp which conveys more than words. But their presence did him good, and afterwards, when all was over and they had gone back to their dreary homes, he said to Renée gently: "I am glad they were there; it was all they could do; it comforts me, dear Renée."

Renée bore her own share in the sorrow silently. She dared not give way, but she grew paler every day. On the fourth day after that sad little funeral the answer to her letter came.

Génie had persuaded Monsieur de Lagrange to go out with her and the children. She had to take home some of her flower-work, and she was at all times timid about walking in the streets alone.

Armande was helping Jules in the kitchen, and Renée sat alone in the sitting-room. She sat in Marie's chair—it was easier to sit in it than to see it standing empty in its wonted place. Her work-frame was before her, but she was not working, for twilight was setting in and the light was dim, her eyes were strained and over-worked. She was alone, and for a few minutes she lay back idle, with her hands clasped in her lap, and allowed full play to the sorrow of her heart.

Since Marie's death the dreariness of life seemed to have redoubled. There was a quiet broken-heartedness about Henri which weighed down all who came near him. Génie had wept till she could weep no more, and had now begun to resume some degree of cheerfulness, and Amande helped with all her power, striving to be bright and to make the children a pretext for the effort.

The burden of life on Renée's young shoulders seemed at the moment more than she could bear.

There was a ring at the bell, and she hastily wiped away the heavy tears which had slowly obscured her sight. They must be returning from their walk, and they must not find her crying. The door opened, but she did not turn round, for to her consternation, she found she could not check the tears now that at last they had found their way. Her voice had a pathetic cheerfulness in it as she asked:

"Well, Henri, was it pleasant, walking?"

"It is not Henri," said a man's deep voice, causing her to spring to her feet. "Dear Mademoiselle Renée, I have come. Alas, alas! Why did you not send for me sooner? I was away from home in the north; your letter only reached me in time to come here without an hour's delay."

Her hands were clasped in Harry Locke's as he stood before her. The comfort, the relief of his presence, was indescribable. Help had come; she need no longer fight it out, and she laid her head down on the back of Marie's empty chair and cried as she had never cried before.

Sir Harry paced up and down the room in sore distress, blaming

himself that he had not come sooner, come unasked. At last she was able to look up and falter :

"It is the relief, the comfort !"

He came forward eagerly, and when she was more composed drew from her all the details of their life since he had parted with them, and she had hardly finished before he began eagerly :

"And now it is all over, this terrible fight with fate, and you will all come home with me. Renée, you will not, must not refuse. Your brother-in-law cannot stay here, it would kill him. I have brought good news for Madame de St. Hilaire. Her father and mother are in England and have secured their money. They have taken a small country house close to me, and are longing, pining for her to join them there."

"Ah, poor Génie ! What happiness ! She had not heard of them for three years."

"They were among the first to emigrate," said Harry gravely, "and have been in Belgium until now."

"I am thankful," said Renée. "Génie has been so brave and good."

"I have also news of Comte de Cavanaugh ; he has left the army and is well. When it came to fighting, he could not bear to fight his own countrymen."

"And nothing of Hermon Dol and little Diane ?" said Renée wistfully.

"Nothing direct. I hear his name mentioned constantly in public affairs—always on the noblest side. His position must be one of great danger."

"You know that he has married Diane ?"

"No. Well, that will ensure safety for her, if safety be possible, but the news from Paris gets darker every day. Tell me truly (I am very fond of Hermon, he is my dearest friend), will your little Diane make him happy ?"

"Yes, I hope so," said Renée thoughtfully. "She was a wild, noble-hearted, generous child when last I saw her, but all that she has been through since must have made a woman of her."

Again the door opened and Monsieur de Lagrange came in with both hands outstretched.

"My friend, my kind friend !" he exclaimed. "This is an extreme happiness. Alas, you have heard ?"

"Yes, I have heard," said Sir Harry gently. "And I am glad to have had the honour of knowing her, dear marquis."

It was gracefully said, and Monsieur de Lagrange looked at him with gratitude glistening in his haggard eyes.

It was wonderful to see what a revival of strength and courage the kind-hearted Englishman brought with him. Génie received her good news with mingled laughter and tears, and a return of passionate hope and longing for her mother.

For Armande only there was no new happiness. She rejoiced in Génie's joy and sympathised with Renée, but secretly in her gentle heart lurked always an unuttered yearning pain, a longing for one word of news of one whose sense of duty had forbidden him to leave the post of danger, and who even now might be numbered among the dead.

To Sir Harry Locke's pressing, even urgent invitation to go home with him there could be no refusal. The Baron and Baronne de St. Pierre, Génie's parents, were actually inhabiting a house belonging to Harry Locke, close to Burnthill. She and her children would go to them at once.

But all was not finally settled until the following day.

Following the ceremonious French custom Sir Harry sought an interview with Monsieur de Lagrange and asked his consent to his entreating his sister-in-law to be his wife.

Henri was astonished beyond measure. Such an idea had never entered his head, and at the first moment was unbearable to him. What should he do without Renée? But by a strong effort he controlled his feelings and put all the cordiality he could muster into his consent, bidding Harry go to the sitting-room and ask Renée himself.

He obeyed.

The sun was setting, and a flood of ruddy gold was streaming into the panelled room. Renée stood in it, the light shining on her soft brown hair, on the sweet steadfast face and lovely tender mouth.

The great Englishman came up to her and taking both her hands in his poured out the story of his love, how in her absence he had learnt that he could love no other woman in the wide world as he loved her.

And Renée looked up to him with shy sweet eyes, knowing that here where she had given her love she could honour and trust him with her whole heart, and they were betrothed.

Meanwhile Monsieur de Lagrange in his perturbation sought Armande and told her what had happened.

Armande was not surprised. She had seen that this would come, and she looked up at the solitary broken man before her with tears in her pretty eyes.

"Dear friend," she said, "I also have my story to tell you. Last time we met, just before the fatal day on which they killed our king, Adrien asked me to be his wife."

"Adrien, my little Armande!"

She covered her face with her hands.

"And now—and now," she faltered, "the days and the months go by, and we do not know where he is, or whether—O God, when will Thou have mercy?"

"My poor little Armande!"

She threw back her head and looked up at him bravely with a quivering smile.

"Ah, perhaps—who can tell? Adrien may yet come back, and until then, dear father, will you let me be your child?"

His answer was to embrace her as a daughter.

That night all their plans were made. The wedding was to take place at once in London, and the young couple to proceed to Burnthill before the others.

The house taken by the St. Pierres was large enough for Monsieur de Lagrange and Armande to take apartments in it, which they would infinitely prefer to setting up a separate house. Armande would not be parted from Génie to whom she was tenderly attached, and to Monsieur de Lagrange the society of Monsieur de St. Pierre would be invaluable.

Sir Harry Locke would now accept no refusal in making himself their banker.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON the 27th of July, 1794, the Reign of Terror came to an end by the execution of Robespierre. The news reached Hermon Dol in the quiet country home in which they had found refuge—Chateauleroux. The old Château de Courcel had been re-named Mon Repos by its owner, and had been respected all through the years in which he had been absent, plunged into political life. It had fallen into neglect and bad repair, but the little family found sufficient habitable rooms, and they required no servants except Jeannot Goulot and some help from the village occasionally. Madame Merline and Diane did the household work themselves.

Adrien de Lagrange was supposed in the neighbourhood to be a plebeian brother of Diane. The people had no idea that she belonged to a noble family, they judged her from her simple dress and the friendliness and kindness of her behaviour in the village. They could not conceive it possible that she could belong to the haughty and exclusive *noblesse*, and Adrien's life of study and writing bore out the idea; he went by his second name—Adrien Amaury.

In the country denunciations had ceased, the people craved for peace, and passionately regretted their empty churches and banished curés.

When the news of the death of Robespierre arrived there was an outbreak of enthusiasm among the people, they illuminated their houses and danced on the village green; but one there was who could not share in their enthusiasm—Hermon Dol. The tragic end, the whole story of the marvellous man, pressed on him with a weight of failure and horror ending in the blackest tragedy. He had shared in the dreams of the idealists, had believed in the Cause and in the

Man. He had striven with might and main, with all his personal God-sent gifts to stem the flood, and had been forced to stand helpless on one side and see the onward whirl into destruction.

The months that followed upon Robespierre's death were full of anxiety and disorder. Hermon could not remain idle in his old home while there was work to be done. He left his mother and his young wife at Mon Repos under the care of Adrien and returned to Paris, where he immediately resumed his political work.

They were times of great distress—wars without, wars within, unhappy France. Royalist risings, fruitless plots, authority weakened and corrupted by past terrorism—and through it all, the man whose life had been that of a true patriot went fearlessly on his way—ever on the side of law and order, ever in favour of impartial justice tempered with mercy, and ceaseless in his efforts to bring back to the blood-stained guilty people the religion which they had spurned.

An ineffaceable sadness had driven the youth from Hermon's noble face. The lines of the mouth became very stern, and never lost the look of past suffering. A light that had once gleamed in sunny brightness in the long blue eyes was quenched in grave stillness. Broken ideals take the sunshine out of life, leaving it very grey.

After a year had elapsed Hermon was able to obtain that the names of Diane's relations and their companions in exile should be struck off the proscribed list, leaving them free to return and endeavour to re-establish their shattered homes, and the day on which she was able to send this news to England was one of the happiest of Diane's life. She could not rest until she had persuaded her husband to take them all to St. François to make ready for the exiles' return.

The little party at Mon Repos had been increased six months before by the arrival of a baby boy, a fine healthy little fellow who was the delight and pride of them all. He was baptised by the names of Rotrand, Eustache, Henri, Adrien—Diane would not relinquish one of them.

The baby must accompany them also. In vain Hermon reminded her that they had left the Château de Lagrange in flames. If it had entirely disappeared there were rooms enough in Mère Perrine's farm to take them in, and nobody but themselves could ascertain whether it would be possible for the family to come home.

Hermon could not refuse—no one could refuse Diane. She had blossomed and revived into all the charming kittenhood of her early days. She played with her baby with such zest that Madame Merline was always reminding her that babies must not be excited too much. She routed out Adrien from poring over his books, made him gallop all over the country with her on half-tamed country horses, and sang about her homely house-work with a sweet voice which had in it the thrill of joy and praise of the lark in spring.

But with the return of her natural gaiety she was ever gentle with her husband. Her absolute devotion to him taught her to soothe with the tenderest affection the strained spirits and depression which even her sweet influence was unable altogether to conquer.

Jeanniot Goulot was happy in the country for a time. He loved Adrien and would have laid down his life for Diane, but the *gamin's* love for his native streets was in his veins, and when Hermon returned to Paris he obtained leave to accompany him. He remained in his service for a short time, then drifted back to his own people, and vanished among them.

So it came about that in the autumn of 1795 the little party arrived at St. François.

They found the greater part of the Château still standing—one wing only was destroyed, the rest had been preserved and carefully looked after by Mère Perrine who had succeeded in being appointed the guardian of the place. Twice it had been put up to sale as *biens d'émigré*, but no one had bidden for it, for the title-deeds could not be found, and no one would buy the huge half-dismantled pile on so uncertain a tenure. For a small sum of money Hermon Dol secured the possession of the place for his uncle, and here the family established themselves while Diane and Madame Merline prepared everything for the exiles' return.

In the dead of night Adrien and Hermon together repaired to the ruined cottage in the wood to search for the treasure buried there. It was a moment of great suspense, for they found that the cottage had been an object of suspicion and had been burned to the ground. Only a heap of white ashes remained where it had stood, and the ground had been dug up in several places, so that it was with a beating heart that Hermon thrust in the spade under the little group of pines, wondering whether the hiding-place had been discovered.

But it was all right; the valise was there, green and rotten and decayed, but still faithfully preserving the fortunes of their house. Together they carried it home and replaced its contents in the strong-room, for Monseigneur's room had escaped all touch of fire; both men had thankful hearts.

Meanwhile Diane had thrown herself into her old nurse's arms and to her great delight she found that Mariette also had returned home, thankful to escape from the misery of her life in Paris.

Diane sat between them, holding a hand of each, pouring out eager questions. She was longing for news of her old friends. Yet much of the news was sad enough. The old Curé, whom she had loved and revered deeply, had remained under Mère Perrine's roof for some weeks. After Diane's flight to Paris, he had been apparently recovering from the cruel treatment he had experienced, when quite suddenly death overtook him. Mère Perrine came in one evening from a walk round her domain and found him lying back in the arm-chair by the fire in a deep sleep from which he never awoke again.

Mademoiselle Jeanne, the clever Sister whose influence had acted so strongly on Diane's whole life, had met with a less peaceful fate. Turned out of the convent at Nantes with the nuns to whom it belonged, she and her dearest friend, the Mother Superior, were hurried to Paris and consigned to the Abbaye prison, where after a few weeks of imprisonment they were sent to the guillotine—Mademoiselle Jeanne, denounced by a former retainer of her family, and the aged nun, whose white hair and saintly life made no excuse for the fact that she belonged to one of the noblest families in France.

Diane wept bitterly over the fate of her old friends. She lacked the courage to tell Hermon, he suffered so bitterly over these things.

Mère Perrine was delighted for the present to leave her farm under the care of her one labourer, while she and Mariette came to live at the Château and wait on the family; in fact, she felt as if she could never leave the baby when she once had it in her arms. The good woman was scandalised that the baby had no nurse—his mother did everything for him with her own hands—but he was a fine little fellow, and by no means always dependent on her. The whole party looked after him, and when nobody was there to do so, he lay quite contentedly wherever he was put with Hermon Dol's favourite deer-hound as a guard.

At last the day arrived on which the travellers were expected, and all through the long hours strong feelings brought both tears and smiles to Diane. They were coming home, but at best it was but a broken remnant of the old home party. The delicate mother on whom all had waited hand and foot was gone, the lonely husband was broken in health and fortune. Eustache too, the handsome son, the favourite, would never cross the threshold again. Would Renée and Armande come home bright and gay as they used to be, or would the weight of all the sufferings they had undergone show to the end of all their lives?

It was five o'clock when they came, two post-chaises driving up to a side entrance, for the front of the house was in ruins, and they came to this smaller, humbler door overhung and shadowed by a splendid lime-tree.

Monsieur de Lagrange was the first to alight and to hand out Armande. He looked thin and worn, and his stern face twitched with uncontrollable feeling; but she was brilliant, bright in a pretty dress such as none in France had yet dared to resume, with flowers in her breast and radiant shy smiles on her sweet face. Diane and Madame Merline clasped her in their arms and rained kisses upon her, while behind them in the shadow of the hall Adrien was waiting for her. She passed on straight to him.

All was over now, the long waiting, the agony of suspense; they were given back to each other from the very gates of Death. In

speechless thankfulness he silently held out his arms and took her to his breast.

Then the first post-chaise rolled off and the next one appeared, and out sprang Harry Locke, helping out Renée—a transfigured Renée, with her little baby, a girl of four months old in her arms, her eyes shining with misty joy, her voice broken with the fervour of their greetings. The baby was snatched from her into Diane's arms while she was held fast to Madame Merline's heart.

At home at last! A home shaken to the foundations but still home, where through the dark clouds of adversity the light of love had broken. Sorrow, and pain, and humiliation had borne fruit in the form of patience, resignation, and, the best of all, sweet charity.

Hermon Dol, looking up from the ruins of his shattered ideals, found that the hope he had lost on earth was shining as a radiant star in heaven.

THE END.



ICI-BAS.

(FROM SULLY PRUDHOMME.)

Ah! here below the lilacs fade,
The song-bird lingers never;
I dream of summers that are made
To last forever.

Ah! here below lips only meet
With passing touch to sever;
I dream of kisses velvet sweet,
To cling forever.

And here the bond that is not sure—
Vain wish, and vain endeavour—
I dream of unions that endure
For aye and ever.

C. E. MEETKERKE.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE FEAR?

"But where's the passage to the skies?—
The road through Death's black valley lies.
Nay, do not shudder at my tale;
Tho' dark the shades, yet safe the vale."

Charles Cotton.

SOMEONE remarking in William Croker's presence, a little while before his death, that death was "an awful thing," "I do not feel it so," he said. "The same Hand which took care of me when I came into this world will take care of me when I go out of it."

The whole universe is God's, not merely this little corner of it in which we dree our earthly weird. All eternity is His, not only this fleeting portion of it called time.

"Unharm'd from change to change we glide,
We fall as in our dreams;
The far-off Terror at our side
A smiling Angel seems.

"Secure on God's all-tender heart
Alike rest great and small;
Why fear to lose our little part,
When He is pledged for all?"*

"God is so good," said Frank Buckland, on the eve of death "so very good to the little fishes, I do not believe He would let their inspector suffer shipwreck at last."

The gate of death only opens out into a larger sphere. It is in one of his last poems that Tennyson bids the spirit not to fear that, in passing beyond the limit of its human state, its vital spark will be lost amid the boundless deeps and heights of eternity:

"Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate."

Lines of which the poet, we are told, was fond, and which his son thought may have been in his mind when, in his last hours, he exclaimed, "I have opened it."

The nearer we approach to death the gentler, as a rule, becomes his aspect. And it often happens that the fear of death which may have followed one through life is changed into a wondering welcome on his actual appearance. As may be judged not only from words spoken in the hour of death, but from the look of peace, sometimes of rapture, left on the faces of the dead. Those very faces which in life had expressed horror at the bare utterance of death's name.

* Whittier: "The Old Burying-Ground."

Bunyan touches on this in his account of the passing of the ever-fearful Mr. Despondency and his daughter Miss Much-Afraid :—
“When the time was come for them to depart, they went up to the brink of the river. The last words of Mr. Despondency were, ‘Farewell, night ; welcome day !’ His daughter went through the river singing.”

“Death, when unmask’d, shows me a friendly face,
And is a terror only at a distance ;
For as the line of life conducts me on
To Death’s great court, the prospect seems more fair,”

says Oliver Goldsmith.

It will be remembered how in Fouqué’s story of ‘Sintram and his Companions,’ when the knight approaches the end of his penance, the spectral form of Death on his skeleton steed, with all his ghastly paraphernalia, undergoes a beautiful change, and all his terrors are converted into charms : “‘Oh ! I can truly appear very gentle,’ said Death. And so it proved indeed. His form became more softly defined in the increasing gleam of light which shone from the hour-glass ; the features, which had been awful in their sternness, wore a gentle smile ; the crown of serpents became a bright palm-wreath ; instead of the horse appeared a white misty cloud in the moonlight ; and the bell gave forth sounds as of sweet lullabies.” How many singers seem to have caught an echo of these lullabies, and sing them over to those of duller ears :—

“I bring to the weary—rest,
To the restless—peace,
To the wakeful—sleep,
To the Dead—Life,
To the Problem—Solution.

“And ye call me Death !—
‘Death the Destroyer,’
‘Death, cruel Death !’
Call me not Death :
Call me Life—Love—Peace !” *

Even as Fouqué fancied of his embodied Death did he appear on her death-bed to a forgotten poetess, the Hon. Mary Monk :

“He woos me to him with a cheerful grace,
And not one terror clouds his meagre face,”

she wrote to her absent husband, pleading fondly with his mourning image which, rising ever between her and the prospect of rest, seemed to bar her way to Heaven :

“The eternal scenes of heaven he sets in view,
And tells me that no other joys are true.”

It was in his extreme old age, when the courageous fires of his life

* From “Life or Death ?” by Hilda Spottiswoode Brodie.

had well-nigh burnt themselves out, that the brave old lion of letters, Walter Savage Landor, wrote—

“Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear;
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.”

And they who have been most used to dwell on the confines of the dark valley, watching with those who are passing through it, bear almost unanimous witness to the serenity with which death's actual coming is encountered.

Walt Whitman, the poet laureate, as he might almost be called, of death, speaks thus characteristically, from his own experience, chiefly as tender of the wounded in the American Civil War, in a poem written only a few weeks before his own death. He deprecates the common designation of death as a “dark valley”:—

“For I have seen many wounded soldiers die
After long suffering; have seen their lives pass off with smiles;
And I have watched the death-hours of the old; and seen the infant
die;
The rich, with all his nurses and his doctors;
And then the poor, in meagreness and poverty;
And I myself for long, O Death, have breathed my every breath
Amid the nearness and the silent thought of thee.

And out of these and thee,
I make a scene, a song, brief (not fear of thee,
Nor gloom's ravines, nor bleak, nor dark—for I do not fear thee . . .)
Of the broad blessed light and perfect air, with meadows, rippling
tides, and trees and flowers and grass,
And the low hum of living breeze; and in the midst God's beautiful
eternal right hand,
Thee, holiest minister of heaven—thee, envoy, usherer, guide at last
of all,
Rich, florid, loosener of the stricture knot call'd life,
Sweet, peaceful, welcome Death.”

Two centuries and a wide ocean, besides an utter diversity in character and point of view, separate Walt Whitman from Jeremy Taylor. Yet in the arguments of the old English divine against the fear of death, and those of America's democratic bard, there is an essential similarity.

“If thou wilt be fearless of death,” says Jeremy Taylor, “endeavour to be in love with the felicities of saints and angels, and be once persuaded to believe that there is a condition of living better than this; that there are creatures more noble than we; that above there is a country better than ours; that the inhabitants know more and know better, and are in places of rest and desire; and first learn to value it, and then learn to purchase it, and death cannot be a formidable thing, which lets us in to so much joy and so much felicity. . . . And every wise man will despise the little evils of that state, which

indeed is the daughter of Fear, but the mother of Rest, and Peace, and Felicity."

The pain of severance of soul from body ("the exquisite transition of death" Whitman calls it) has, many think, been greatly exaggerated. In the happy phrase of Garth, who, it will be remembered, was a physician,

"Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 'tis o'er,"

In George MacDonald's poem, "A Hidden Life," a child asks his father,

"What think you, father, is it hard, this dying?"

And the father answers that, as he judged, "though more by hope than sight," it seems harder to the lookers-on than it is in actual experience:

"It may be, each breath
That they would call a gasp, seems unto him
A sigh of pleasure; or, at most, the sob
Wherewith the unclothed spirit, step by step,
Wades forth into the cool eternal sea."

At the worst, the peace of Paradise is cheaply purchased by the cruellest pain. Sings Christina Rossetti, of the martyrs dying in their furnace fires:

"Yet one pang, searching and sore,
And then heaven for evermore."

It is a pang, moreover, which some are almost altogether spared. "Mercy changed death into sleep," says Blake. And mercy sometimes changes sleep into death. "He died in peace with Heaven and earth, without knowing that he was going to leave the one, or rise again in the other," wrote Miss Berry, of the translation of her aged father.

Of one dying at the opposite pole of life, Longfellow says: "The far country, toward which we journey, seems nearer to us, and the way less dark; for thou hast gone before, passing so quietly to thy rest, that day itself dies not more calmly."

"Death," declares Sir Thomas Browne, "is the cure of all diseases. There is no *catholicon* or universal remedy I know but this, which though nauseous to queasy stomachs, yet to prepared appetites is nectar, and a pleasant potion of immortality."

Sir Walter Raleigh, smiling erect on the scaffold, cried in accents breathless with his hurried ascent, "Show me the axe." Touching its edge with his finger to feel its keenness, and then, kissing the blade, he said: "This gives me no fear. It is a sharp and fair medicine, to cure me of all my diseases."

It was with absolute gaiety that Sir Thomas More encountered

death. Within near view of his most grievous execution, he all but laughed away the sentence of his judges, and the lamentations of his wife and children, discoursing to these latter pleasantly of Heaven, and protesting that would they but encourage him with their support, "it should so comfort him, that for very joy thereof it would make him merrily to run to death."

"O harmless Death! whom still the valiant brave,
The wise expect, the sorrowful invite,
And all the good embrace, who know the grave
A short, dark passage to eternal light."*

No one has ever expressed a nobler fearlessness of death, than the old poet, Joshua Sylvester:

"Let whoso list think death a dreadful thing,
And hold the grave in horror and in hate;
I think them, I, most worth the welcoming;
Where end our woes, our joys initiate.

"Man death abhors, repines and murmurs at her,
Blind in that law which made her good for him;
Both birth and death the daughters are of Nature;
In whom is naught imperfect, nothing grim.

"Death's ugliness is but imagined;
Under foul vizard a fair face she wears;
Her vizard off, there is no more to dread;
We laugh at children whom a vizard fears."†

From these same unreasoning apprehensions of childhood it is that Bacon argues. "Men fear death as children fear to go into a dark room." A saying Richard Baxter may have had in mind when he wrote in a hymn which has brought courage and comfort to many:

"Christ leads us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before."

A sick girl, as told of in a story by Charlotte Maria Tucker (A.L.O.E.), had fallen under the fear of death. Lying awake one night she became aware of a shadow moving about in the moonlight, which so wrought on her nervous terrors that, unable at last to control herself, she screamed aloud. When, immediately advancing into view, behold her dearest friend! Fancying the invalid asleep, she had stolen unperceived into the room; and soothing her now with tenderest ministry, she drew from the incident the reflection that even thus is death also nothing more, nor worse, than a shadow—The Shadow of a Friend.

If death happened only to a few, would those few, taking into account

* Sir William Davenant.

† "Memorials of Mortalitie," translated from Pierre Matthieu. These stanzas do not follow each other in the poem.

the hopes which have gathered about the grave, be objects of pity, or else of envy? But,

"'Tis the great birthright of mankind to die,"—

a birthright none can rob us of. Or if death happened only to the aged, then might he wear a greyer aspect. But his image is brightened, if also saddened, by the thought of the little laughing children, the merry lads and lasses, the happy mothers, the strong men in the full swing of their life-work, whom he has borne away. "It is the same harmless thing that a poor shepherd suffered yesterday, or a maidservant to-day," as Jeremy Taylor sweetly urges.

For, so far from death being the lonely thing it seems in the apprehensions of so many, "at the same time in which you die," again says Jeremy Taylor, "in that very night a thousand creatures die with you."

"Doth not death fright you?" asks the cruel minister of her brother's vengeance, Bosola, of the Duchess of Malfy, in Webster's play. And she answers, with the reflection wherewith Socrates comforted himself in his hour of death, in the memorable words:

"Who would be afraid on't,
Knowing to meet such excellent company
In the other world?"

This is the true thought, that we are going out into no solitary region, but to one peopled with familiar presences, nay, perhaps, with our dearest and nearest. This is the thought which so often makes death an object of longing rather than of fear. How many might exclaim with Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, "I have far more dead friends than living."

"Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death?" asks Adelaide Procter:—

"He will give back what neither time, nor might,
Nor passionate prayers, nor longing hope restore,
(Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight;)
He will give back those who are gone before. . . .

"Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee."

So too Southey, in his "Roderick":—

"Death will make
All clear, and, joining us in better worlds,
Complete our union there!"

And Thomson, of "The Seasons":—

"Blest be the bark that wafts us to the shore
Where death-divided friends shall part no more."

P. W. ROOSE.

THE VISIT.

I.

I prayed my love to come and see
The house wherein I dwell.
"And many and many a one," I said,
"Has a house set forth as well ;
Yet dare I pray you come," I said,
"To the house wherein I dwell ?

"And many and many a one," I said,
"Has braver rooms to show.
'Tis not for them I bid you come,
And through the chambers go.
But my house is built four-square to face
The four free winds that blow.

"And many and many a one, my love,
Has windows painted gay ;
Mine only let the sun and stars
Shine in by night and day :
And through my windows you may see
The ocean far away.

"And many and many a one," I said,
"Can show you gardens fair,
With high-grown hedge and sheltering wall,
And flowers rich and rare,
And close-clipt lawns, and pathways trim,
Well ordered everywhere.

"My garden's nought—my flowers are wild
(There's rosemary and rue)—
No sheltering wall have I to shut
The winds from me and you.
But through the windows of my house
The wide world lies in view.

"No fair-walled pleasure-ground have I,
From all the world withdrawn,
Where comes no ruder sound than songs
Of birds about the lawn.
But from the housetop I descry
The promise of the dawn."

II.

Then came my love ; and through the house
 We wandered hand in hand,
 And through the windows watched afar
 The waves break up the strand.
 "These be fair windows," said my love,
 "That look beyond the land!"

And through and through the house we went
 And up and down the stair ;
 Then said my love (and gazed on me
 With eyes of tender care),
 "What door is this that you pass by?
 Sure I may enter there?"

Then I—"Of all who ever came
 To see my house before,
 You are the first that ever yet
 Espied yon hidden door.
 Not even you, true love," said I,
 "May tread that chamber floor."

Nought spake my love, but gazed on me
 With tender chiding eyes.
 And on from room to room we went,
 And looked o'er land and skies.
 "And thus I show you, love," I said,
 "The things which most I prize :

"*My best*—that room holds all *my worst*—
 I hide my weakness there."
 Nought spake my love, but gazed on me—
 Then something made me dare ;
 With trembling haste I drew my love,
 We two went down the stair.

"Come, know me all in all!" I cried,
 And flung the bolts aside.
 "At least I will be true," I said,
 "Whatever may betide!
 I will not only show my strength,
 And all my weakness hide!

"And will you leave me now," I said,
 "Now that you understand?"
 "Nay," said my love, and smiled through tears,
 And took me by the hand ;
 "But I will mount and look with you
 Beyond the sea and land!"

MARY A. M. MARKS.

MR. CHOLMONDELEY'S INDECISION.

BY EDITH GRAY WHEELWRIGHT.

THE pale light from a dull February sky shining through the Library windows was hardly sufficient to illumine all the book-lined crevices of the spacious and beautiful old room. Upon some of the lowest shelves the titles of the books were not too evident; and an early visitor, during a hasty and impatient search, gave vent to occasional mutterings and exclamations of annoyance. Then at last he rose, book in hand, abruptly scanning a page of the small Greek text as he walked to the window.

Another visitor, sitting writing at a long table, looked up at his approach with a word of salutation. The civility was returned with a somewhat grim acknowledgment; and the writer, who was, at least in all things that pertained to the outer man, a credit to himself and to his college, stayed his pen for a moment in contemplative mood. The silhouette presented to his gaze against the window pane was that of a tall spare man, negligently attired in well-worn garments. His college gown displayed a rent across the shoulder; and an ancient knapsack, patched and mended was tucked away under his arm. He was a man still in the prime of life; but the deep furrows on his brow and a suspicion of grey in hair and beard made him appear older. His colleague took up his pen again with a slight uplifting of the eyebrows. "The eccentricities of a classical tutor," he said to himself softly; "I am sure the undergraduates must have worked him into an epigram or a poem. Poor Cholmondeley! Pity, to be sure—great pity."

But the classical tutor was as usual serenely unaware of the glance of criticism. Had he known it, it would not have troubled him. There was, in fact, a certain all-determining quality beneath his external attributes, by virtue of which he could afford to be indifferent to the comments of his fellow men. For in personal attraction, in fastidious charm of manner and of speech, few could equal him. He was the *vir antiqui moris*; the type which each century enshrines in remembrance and mourns as lost.

He had just closed his book when a figure, passing across the quadrangle below, arrested his attention; and with a start of manifest annoyance he turned away. The world on this particular morning was evidently not well adjusted to his requirements: he was worried, perplexed, and exceedingly out of humour, and this little incident was tending to make matters worse. It was a presumably innocent thing for a woman to be crossing the "quad" at that early hour into

the gardens. It might be the most natural thing in the world; but to Mr. Cholmondeley it was undoubtedly unpleasing. He replaced the book upon the shelf, and hurried across the library with nervous, agitated footsteps, descended the staircase, and stepped out into the small, solitary quadrangle. "Was there ever a more distressing situation?" The words came in a whisper to his lips as he hurried along. "I certainly meant what I said yesterday, when I asked her to marry me. But it was so extremely unpractical—emotional. I certainly had not given the matter sufficient thought; and really when one comes to consider the extreme importance of such a serious step—dear me, I believe that she herself must be feeling it: she is probably wishing at this moment that nothing had been said. It is most embarrassing. I cannot conceive what could have induced me to speak as I did. At my age, too, a man should govern himself more wisely."

The old knapsack slipped to the ground, and he turned to recover it. As he did so he became aware of a figure advancing; then standing quietly by his side.

"I saw it drop," said a voice in clear, womanly accents, "and I wondered whether you would notice it. I despaired of overtaking you. Are you in a hurry? Have you a lecture at eleven?"

She was standing talking to him with a self-possession just softened and humanised by a gentle, underlying glow. Mr. Cholmondeley's face as he beheld her was a study in the more complex emotions. Perplexity and discomfort struggled with his instinctive courtesy and found expression even in a blush. He stepped sideways with an odd, nervous little movement, like the *chassé* in a quadrille.

"It is at half-past eleven," he answered. "I was not hurrying on that account. I had just been—but you! What brings you here so early?"

She held up a little gold pencil-case in triumph.

"There! Am I not lucky? Do you know, I dropped it in the gardens yesterday afternoon as we were walking? And I only missed it just now. I thought it just possible that I might find it somewhere here, so I started off immediately, and—behold!"

"Ah," he said gravely, "I am very glad. It is a pretty thing, to be sure."

"And now," she continued brightly, "I am glad that I met you. There are one or two things I wanted to say, if you have a few moments to spare. Have you? Can we just walk back towards the gardens?"

"I—you know that I am always at your service," he said mechanically, as he turned with a little bow. He was accustomed in small matters to sacrifice inclination upon the altar of his fastidious courtesy, even when the sacrifice was manifestly unwise. So he walked by her side in silence as they passed out under a low vaulted archway into the beautifully ordered grounds.

"I don't want you to come with me unless you are perfectly free," said Miss Raymond, after a pause. "You must never let me take up your time unduly."

His reply was intercepted by the appearance of two of the fellows, who passed them hurriedly along the walk with a word of recognition. Upon Mr. Cholmondeley's brow the shadow deepened.

"Ha! one can never be alone in this place," he said irritably; "never unmolested. There is always somebody to see everything that you do—to know everything—and to talk. It is most disagreeable."

Miss Raymond glanced at him critically, uncertain whether indigestion or the undergraduates might be most to blame.

"Really," she said laughing, "I thought that the 'Grundyism' might surely be dropped now, even within college walls. Besides, we shall, as individuals, henceforth cease to interest anybody. They will talk no more. An engagement is of all things the most prosaic. It has never, I think, inspired a poem or an essay."

"You speak lightly," he replied, in his low musical tones; "but is the matter really so light? I confess that the more I thought over it the more I became aware of its exceeding gravity—its responsibility—for us both. I will venture to say that no other crisis in life is beset by such dangers; at no other time would precipitate action be so fool—so unwise. But I have no doubt that you also have been thinking the same. It is your natural buoyancy of spirit and your consideration for others which are leading you to hide your graver thoughts and fears."

He stooped suddenly—all his actions were as rapid as his speech—to brush away the clinging earth from the fair green shoot of an incipient daffodil; and Miss Raymond stood looking at him in silence. Upon her bright, intelligent face, from which the youth had faded not unkindly, giving place to a maturity of undoubted charm, there came a cloud of manifest perplexity. She had known Frederick Cholmondeley for some years; in good moods and in bad; in impulse and indecision; and she had considered him partly as an incarnate joke not to be too curiously dissected, and partly as a man of rare and delightful gifts. No one could be more pleasant as a companion; more tender and charming as a friend. But just now it was not apparent in what light he was to be regarded; and feeling herself at a loss, her resentment grew.

"I am fully alive to the gravity of the situation," she said coldly, "but if I were unprepared to meet it, I should have told you so before. But why do we now speak of it? I thought that yesterday we understood each other, once for all."

He turned to her for an instant with just the delicate impression of tenderness which she knew so well, and then straightened himself abruptly. The main issue with a host of kindred doubts and perplexities was uppermost in his mind.

"I really—I cannot honestly say that I remember all that we may

have said yesterday," he answered, speaking very rapidly indeed. "I know that I have retained an impression of a most delightful afternoon spent in your society; so delightful, indeed, that I venture to think that I may have been incapable of considering any matter in its graver aspects, of arriving at any sane and temperate conclusion at all."

Miss Raymond had inherited with a long pedigree and a scanty purse a considerable share of pride. She held out her hand quietly.

"Perhaps we had better not discuss the question now," she said. "It might make you late for lecture. In the meantime, I gather that, owing to an imperfect memory, you would prefer the subject we spoke of yesterday not to be mentioned again. That is all that I understand at present. Perhaps you will explain the rest to me at your leisure. Now good-bye."

Her farewell gesture made it impossible for him to follow; and he stood looking after her helplessly as she disappeared among the trees.

At an entertainment given by some undergraduates that evening, a small handful of kindly dons were present among a mixed assembly. The evening wore away merrily, with music and recitation, not the least successful of the comic pieces being a dissertation upon the art of making up one's mind. In this pungent satire two ladies were represented in the protracted agony of choosing between two rival gowns.

The witty undergraduate who recited the piece gave it full dramatic emphasis, and the audience were loud in applause. Very few had eyes for Mr. Cholmondeley, who sat grimly in the background, having been inveigled thither in an unguarded hour. Only one or two of his pupils observed him from afar with sympathetic comments. The inimitable portrait of Horace was of course fastened on him perpetually.

*"Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero; castigat censorque minorum."*

But even while they laughed at his "cranks" and waywardness, they had for him, perhaps more than for any other of the tutors, a genuine regard.

He was not enjoying himself during this recitation. It seemed to him intolerably absurd.

"Yes; I think I like the red, dear." (The reciter's voice took a confidential tone.) "There is something so nice about it. It makes you *feel* warm if you—if you are *not* warm."

The audience tittered insanely. What a ridiculous exhibition it was! To make light of one of the most distressing ailments of human nature! Had he not suffered from it from boyhood? Had not that curse of indecision even checked and baffled his career? And now, again, it was dogging his footsteps. Yesterday he had

been honestly, nay anxiously, desirous of making Miss Raymond his wife, and no one—not even he himself—could have brought to light the cause of his present difficulty. Somehow, in the grey light of morning, he had become conscious of some indefinable depression of spirit, some change in his estimate of things. The solitude of his rooms, which yesterday he had spoken of as unendurable, now struck him as too precious to be lightly cast aside. He loved it all; the rooms and the quad and the gardens. Never before had his present life appeared so desirable in his eyes. Could a woman's companionship, however charming, be lightly weighed against it?

Thus had the still small voice of Reason chilled the impulses of Love. But when he listened to the laughter of the audience, and when, a little later, he found himself hurrying alone along the beautiful old streets, the swing of the pendulum again plunged him—bruised in spirit and greatly repentant—back into his first desire. With an overpowering distress and shame he reviewed that morning's conversation. It had been unjustifiable on his part—brutal to the last degree. What could she have thought of him? She who had ever been so considerate, so kind. He owed her instant reparation. He would go immediately and try to remedy the harm that had been done.

A short walk brought him to her house, and he rang the bell. There was a curious, almost childlike, transparency in all his moods and actions. Blunders were frequent, but Penitence swiftly and invariably followed in the rear.

It was with a chilling sense of disappointment that he found himself ushered into a drawing-room full of guests. A social evening was in progress. The visitors, many of whom he knew, sat chatting in groups or at a card-table. Upon a sofa near the wall Miss Raymond and a gentleman were talking earnestly. A glance at them revealed a degree of intimacy which held him for the moment mute. He barely heeded her brief introduction; certainly he took little trouble to add to the conviviality of the scene. On the contrary, he soon escaped from it without having had a word with her privately. She had played the hostess to perfection, had received him kindly with the rest, and that was all.

Into the unguarded fortress of his soul a crowd of besieging thoughts rushed wildly. He was possessed by a sudden jealous hatred of the man whom he had never seen before. Who was he? Why had she never mentioned him? A suspicion of Miss Raymond's versatility once harboured entirely threw into the background the confession of his own.

The evening passed heavily. A conscientious undergraduate brought an unimaginative construe of Thucydides, and a lazy one looked in with an excuse. The morning came and brought the usual round of duties and distractions. In the afternoon, he sat down and wrote three letters, all varying from the injured to the

contrite, in order to bring matters to an understanding; but he tore up each in turn. Then, with a set face and determined footstep, he started to see Miss Raymond.

She was alone this time, and rose with her accustomed self-possession to shake hands.

"I am so sorry that you should have found a friendly gathering here last night," she observed pleasantly, "for I know that you do not like such things; but of course I was not expecting you."

He smiled grimly as he took a seat.

"That," he said, "was quite evident. I came merely to have a few words with you, a few words which I believe were needed to avoid misunderstanding. I was sorry to find you so—so pre-occupied."

"Never mind," said Miss Raymond cheerfully, "you can tell me all about it now."

He brought his hand down upon his knee with an impatient gesture.

"You persist in treating it all so lightly," he said, in an injured tone. "I wonder sometimes whether you have due regard for other people's feelings."

"How easily men misjudge," she retorted carelessly; "Mr. Langham made just the same complaint last night with just as little cause."

"Langham?" He looked up sharply. "Was that the man who sat upon the sofa? Who is he?"

"Oh, I thought you knew. He is a coach who came originally from Queen's, Cambridge."

"Ha, a Cambridge man! What do you say he is—a mathematical coach?"

"Oh, no! I think classical."

"What? Dear me, I never heard of such a thing. I cannot conceive—but perhaps I ought not to say it, I may be prejudiced; but it really is a remarkable thing, and I believe it is generally acknowledged, that Cambridge men can *not* translate. There is a lack of finish, a lack of—but you were going to tell me about this—this person. Is he an intimate friend of yours?"

She nodded. "Have you any objection? I suppose one can hardly have too many friends."

He rose and walked to the window, and she watched him quietly. Once, when he was not looking, her eyes grew dim, but she recovered herself immediately. There was a long pause, and then he turned to her with something of dignity in his tone.

"I don't know what to think," he said. "You are not treating me quite kindly. I came here yesterday, and am come to-day to make reparation—to ask your forgiveness; and first I find you deep in conversation with this—person, I forget his name—and now you will not be serious. What am I to think?"

"I will tell you what *I* think," she answered, half laughing, half impatiently; "you don't know your own mind two minutes."

Mr. Cholmondeley winced. "I know it now," he said humbly, "once for all. Listen! Will you—can you take me back on the old terms, and we will never speak of this again. If I could only tell you—assure you—how ashamed and miserable I have felt, how utterly unworthy of your kindness and forbearance, how deeply I should value one more final proof of it, one more chance accorded to me."

Very gently, with his characteristic touch of old-world reverence, he had taken both her hands. Into his voice came the well-known tender inflection, which lent an emphasis that more ardent expressions might lack.

Miss Raymond looked up at him uncertainly. A little smile hovered about her lips as she recalled the vision of the despised tutor of Queen's. Between his buoyant personality and the eccentric, shabbily attired hero of the present hour lay an "interval which no geometrical ratio could express." She appreciated the difference fully.

"I meant never to forgive you," she said gravely, "for you know you made me very uncomfortable and placed me in a very awkward position indeed. You see, I never ought to have trusted you for a moment. You are not meant to be trusted, because I know that you never think the same thing for two minutes together. You can't help it; and the worst of it is, people can't help liking you all the same. But I am not going to bind myself or you any further. It is so much better, you see, to find out a mistake first, and say so, than to find out—afterwards. That—is ruin——"

"It is not a mistake; it never was a mistake," he protested, kneeling beside her now in passionate entreaty. "Only try me, and see."

* * * * *

It was nearing the end of the Easter vacation, that charming little interval of growth and quietude when the loveliest of English cities begins to assume its adorable spring attire. Mr. Cholmondeley had, according to his wont, remained in college, and nobody had ever remembered him in so blithe and gracious a mood. The quiet days had passed luxuriously, unclouded by doubts and fears. For the past twenty-one days the barometer of his inclination had been high and steady; he could perceive no shadow of a change. A letter from Miss Raymond was in his pocket arranging a meeting in London upon the following day. He had not seen her since that fateful afternoon when the goddess of Persuasion had wrought him victory; she had been away ever since. But a tacit understanding had been renewed between them, and it was agreed that they should meet as on a previous occasion at the Royal Academy upon the opening day. The contemplation of this event gave him undoubted pleasure. Although, as Miss Raymond had willed it so, there was now no definite engagement between them, still he knew that at the end of this short probation the bond would be renewed. He was

conscious only of ardent satisfaction in this prospect. He told himself constantly that college life was in all ways undesirable for a man advancing in years.

It was a bright spring morning, and he spent an hour or so in the University parks watching with keen, observant interest the growth of the shrubs and trees. As he was turning homewards the Professor of Modern History accosted him with a genial air. "I have just returned from Normandy," he said smiling, "and a most pleasant experience I have had. I can't spend my vacations as you do, you know, without change of scene; I should grow weary and flat and unprofitable. But I have been wanting to see you, my dear fellow, to congratulate you. I do so most heartily, though, of course, it was no surprise to me or to anyone else, I imagine; we had expected it all along."

Mr. Cholmondeley stepped sideways. "I really don't know to what you allude," he said stiffly.

The Professor stared at him. "Don't know?" he repeated, in bewilderment; "well, I thought it was an open secret—your engagement to Miss Raymond, of course, I mean."

"There is no definite engagement at all," replied Mr. Cholmondeley, with emphasis; "and I cannot conceive how you could have heard of it. She—she must have told you herself."

"Well, if that is the way to speak of it," stammered the Professor, in righteous indignation, "upon my word——"

But Mr. Cholmondeley, with a muttered apology and excuse, was hastening back to college in a strangely altered frame of mind. Nothing ever ruffled him so seriously as the innocent comments of other people upon his own affairs. He would invest the simplest things with mystery, and resent as a personal grievance any attempt to tear the veil aside. It struck him as most unnecessary, even indelicate, that Miss Raymond should have been in such haste to communicate the news. He supposed that by this time the whole of her acquaintance knew of it; knew it, as a matter of fact, more certainly than they did themselves. It was all very ridiculous. He had now not the slightest intention of breaking off their relationship—he never could think of that last interview without a certain distress and shame—but he was annoyed and irritated, and continued so throughout the day.

Towards evening he became aware of actual physical discomfort, following as it often did upon a disturbed condition of mind. He felt very disinclined for a journey on the morrow. The visit to the Academy would be, at the best, a tiring episode, and in any case he would be seeing Miss Raymond very shortly again. He wrote a letter briefly excusing himself. He was never demonstrative on paper; his letters were models of propriety, often frigid expressions of fastidious reserve, to which this was no exception. But after its departure he regained something of his former equanimity; the

morning's annoyance vanished in a more contemplative mood. When once he was married this aimless and mistaken chatter, untimely congratulations at the street corners, inquisitive comments within college walls, would cease to offend him. The meaning of home, which for thirty years had dropped from his experience, would once more gladden his solitary days. Upon the joyous aspects of married life he dwelt continually. He wondered why, at the outset, he had felt so doubtful. The spectre of indecision finally was laid.

In the meantime he had received no answer to his letter; only, after the lapse of several days, a postcard announcing the date of Miss Raymond's intended return. He seized it with relief and satisfaction. He would be very glad when she was back again, away from the distractions of London, and able to take up the thread of her ordinary occupations. She evidently had no time for letter-writing. The hurry and variety of the modern world was certainly inimical to the duties, even the courtesies of life.

Upon the evening of her return he dressed himself with more care than usual, and set out at a brisk pace towards her house. The dusk was falling upon the city, veiling the stately walls and dainty pinnacles in gloom. Here and there along the streets a light gleamed cheerfully, and knots of undergraduates were talking and laughing as they sauntered by. Upon the steps of the new schools a woman was standing, waiting apparently for someone who was within. Mr. Cholmondeley halted abruptly as he saw her, then hurried forward with outstretched hand.

"Why, it is you," he said gently, "and I was on my way to see you—to inquire for you. Are you now at liberty? May I wait?"

He paused as the light fell upon her features. There was an alteration somewhere. Surely she looked older than when they last had met, and yet there was a quiet look about her, as if the heart was at rest.

Across the hall someone in cap and gown was seen approaching them. There was a moment's silence; then with a quiet, unresponsive gesture she took the proffered hand.

"I am afraid I am not quite at liberty," she answered. "I am waiting for my husband. Ah, perhaps you had not heard that I was married yesterday. Will you let me introduce you again?"

She turned her head quickly as she spoke with a little involuntary smile of self-congratulation.

"Whom did you say, my dear?" said Mr. Langham, as his wife advanced to meet him saying something in a low tone. "Is it Mr. Cholmondeley? Oh, yes, to be sure, I remember! I shall be extremely happy to——"

But Mr. Cholmondeley was gone.

